THE MEMOIRS OF HARRIETTE WILSON

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This edition of *The Memoirs of Harriette Wilson* is printed upon laid paper of fine quality specially made for The Navarre Society, and is strictly limited.

HARRIETTE WILSON.

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THE MEMOIRS OF HARRIETTE WILSON

WRITTEN BY HERSELF

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE

ILLUSTRATED WITH 32 PORTRAITS
FROM CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

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NOTE REGARDING HARRIETTE WILSON

Harriette Wilson, the daughter of John and Amelia Dubochet, was born in London on February 22, 1786 *Her birth is recorded in the Parish Register of St. George, Hanover Square, and her father's name appears in the List of Rate Payers* (1786) *as residing at* 2 *Carrington Street, Mayfair. The house still exists, and its external structure seems to have been unaltered since the time it was built.*

In old peerage volumes Dubochet, whose daughter Sophia married the second Lord Berwick, is vaguely described as M. Dubochet of Switzerland, but there is good reason for assuming that he was a clockmaker. The article on Harriette Wilson in the Dictionary of National Biography states that she was born about 1789, *that her father kept a small shop in Mayfair, and that she flourished between the years* 1810 *and* 1825. *There can be no question, however, that she was on terms of intimacy, about* 1805, *with the sixth Duke of Argyle, and that in the following year she became the mistress of John, afterwards Viscount, Ponsonby, a handsome man of whom George IV. was jealous on account of Lady Conyngham. Ponsonby succeeded as Baron on November* 5, 1806, *and, as*

related in the Memoirs, he met Harriette a few weeks before his father's death.

The Memoirs were first published in 1825 *by John Joseph Stockdale, who issued them in paper cover parts, and so great was the demand that a barrier had to be erected in Stockdale's shop to regulate the crowd that came to buy. Thirty editions are said to have been sold in one year, and the work was also pirated by T. Douglas, E. Thomas, and others. The present edition is reprinted from the original paper cover parts.*

The Duke of Wellington, the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Alvanley, "Poodle" Byng, Beau Brummell, "King" Allen, Lord Yarmouth (Thackeray's Marquis of Steyne), and the third Duke of Leinster, were among the numerous men of rank and fashion who came to Harriette's house, and what is really valuable in her book is the almost photographic fidelity with which she reproduces the conversations and traits of her visitors. She observed the men of her "salon" as only a clever woman can, and, because of this, the Memoirs are lifted from worthlessness and form a most interesting addition to the society chronicles of the time. Sir Walter Scott in his Journal, December 9, 1825, *writes as follows about the Memoirs and Harriette:*

". . . there is some good retailing of conversations, in which the style of the speaker, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated. . . . Some one asked Lord A——y, himself very sorrily handled from time to time, if Harriette Wilson had been pretty correct on the whole. 'Why, faith,' he replied, 'I believe so.' . . . I think," proceeds Sir Walter, "I once supped in her

company more than twenty years since at Mat Lewis's, where the company, as the Duke said to Lucio, chanced to be 'fairer than honest.' She was far from beautiful . . . but a smart saucy girl with good eyes and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy."

After 1825 *very little is known of Harriette Wilson beyond the fact that she lived abroad and married a Colonel Rochfort, with whom she resided for a time at* 111 *Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris.*

CHAPTER I

I SHALL not say why and how I became, at the age of fifteen, the mistress of the Earl of Craven. Whether it was love, or the severity of my father, the depravity of my own heart, or the winning arts of the noble lord, which induced me to leave my paternal roof and place myself under his protection, does not now much signify; or, if it does, I am not in the humour to gratify curiosity in this matter.

I resided on the Marine Parade at Brighton, and I remember that Lord Craven used to draw cocoa trees, and his fellows as he called them, on the best vellum paper for my amusement. "Here stood the enemy," he would say, "and here, my love, are my fellows. There the cocoa trees, &c." It was, in fact, a dead bore. All these cocoa trees and fellows, at past eleven o'clock at night, could have no peculiar interest for a child like myself, so lately in the habit of retiring early to rest. One night, I recollect, I fell asleep; and, as I often dream, I said yawning, and half awake, "O Lord! O Lord! Craven has got me into the West Indies again." In short I soon found that I had made but a bad speculation, by going from my father to Lord Craven. I was even more afraid of the latter than I had been of the former. Not that there was any particular harm in the man beyond his cocoa trees; but we never suited nor understood each other.

I was not depraved enough to determine immediately on a new choice, and yet I often thought about it. How indeed could I do otherwise, when

the Honourable Frederick Lamb was my constant visitor, and talked to me of nothing else? However, in justice to myself, I must declare that the idea of the possibility of deceiving Lord Craven while I was under his roof, never once entered into my head. Frederick was then very handsome, and certainly tried with all his soul and with all his strength, to convince me that constancy to Lord Craven was the greatest nonsense in the world. I firmly believe that Frederick Lamb sincerely loved me, and deeply regretted that he had no fortune to invite me to share with him.

Lord Melbourne, his father, was a good man. Not one of your stiff-laced, moralising fathers, who preach chastity and forbearance to their children. Quite the contrary, he congratulated his son on the lucky circumstance of his friend Craven having such a fine girl with him.

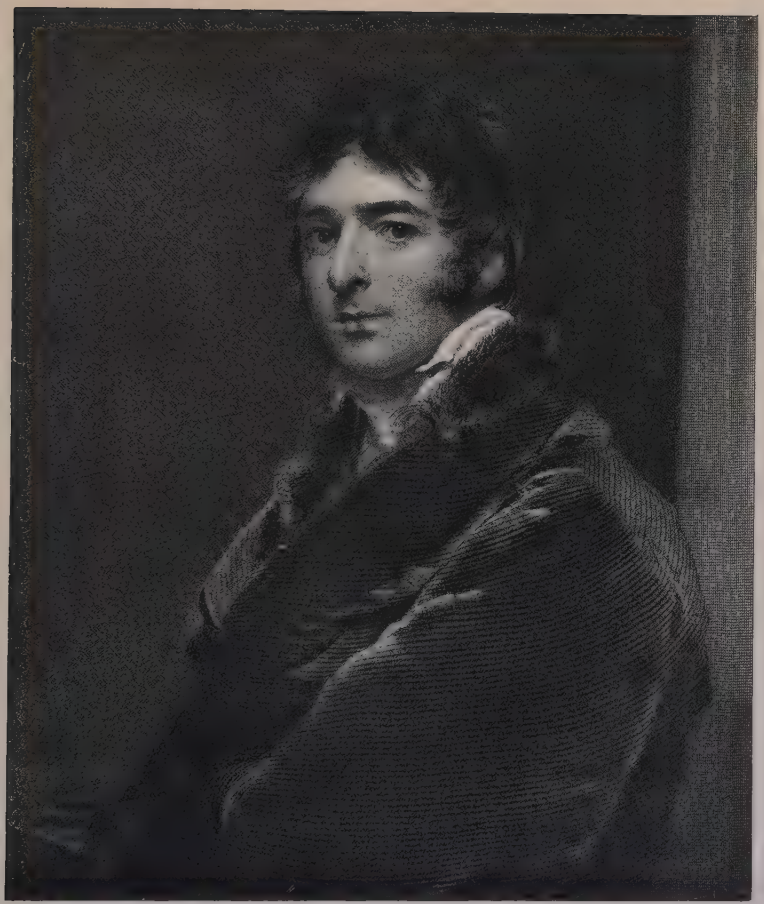
"No such thing," answered Frederick Lamb, "I am unsuccessful there. Harriette will have nothing at all to do with me."

"Nonsense!" rejoined Melbourne, in great surprise, "I never heard anything half so ridiculous in all my life. The girl must be mad! She looks mad. I thought so the other day, when I met her galloping about, with her feathers blowing, and her thick dark hair about her ears.

"I'll speak to Harriette for you," added his lordship, after a long pause, and then continued repeating to himself, in an undertone, "not have my son indeed! Six feet high! A fine, straight, handsome, noble young fellow! I wonder what she would have!"

In truth, I scarcely knew myself; but something I determined on: so miserably tired was I of Craven, and his cocoa trees, and his sailing-boats, and his ugly, cotton nightcap.

"Surely," I would say, "all men do not wear those shocking nightcaps; else all women's illusions had been destroyed on the first night of their marriage!"



LORD MELBOURNE

[*To face page* 6

I wonder, thought I, what sort of a nightcap the Prince of Wales wears? Then I went on to wonder whether the Prince of Wales would think me as beautiful as Frederick Lamb did? Next I reflected that Frederick Lamb was younger than the Prince; but then again, a Prince of Wales!

I was undecided: my heart began to soften. I thought of my dear mother and I wished I had never left her. It was too late, however, now. My father would not suffer me to return, and, as to passing my life, or any more of it, with Craven, cotton night-cap and all, it was death! He never once made me laugh, nor said anything to please me.

Thus musing, I listlessly turned over my writing book, half in the humour to address the Prince of Wales! A sheet of paper, covered with Lord Craven's cocoa trees, decided me, and I wrote the following letter, which I addressed to the Prince.

"BRIGHTON

"I am told that I am very beautiful, so perhaps you would like to see me; and I wish that, since so many are disposed to love me, one, for in the humility of my heart I should be quite satisfied with one, would be at the pains to make me love him. In the meantime, this is all very dull work, Sir, and worse even than being at home with my father: so, if you pity me, and believe you could make me in love with you, write to me, and direct to the post office here."

By return of post, I received an answer nearly to this effect: I believe from Colonel Thomas.

"Miss Wilson's letter has been received by the noble individual to whom it was addressed. If Miss Wilson will come to town, she may have an interview, by directing her letter as before."

I answered this note directly, addressing my letter to the Prince of Wales.

"SIR,—To travel fifty-two miles this bad weather, merely to see a man, with only the given number of

legs, arms, fingers, &c., would, you must admit, be madness in a girl like myself, surrounded by humble admirers who are ever ready to travel any distance for the honour of kissing the tip of her little finger; but, if you can prove to me that you are one bit better than any man who may be ready to attend my bidding, I'll e'en start for London directly. So, if you can do anything better in the way of pleasing a lady than ordinary men, write directly: if not, adieu, Monsieur le Prince."

It was necessary to put this letter into the post office myself, as Lord Craven's black footman would have been somewhat surprised at its address. Crossing the Steyne I met Lord Melbourne, who joined me immediately.

"Where is Craven?" said his lordship, shaking hands with me.

"Attending to his military duties at Lewes, my lord."

"And where's my son Fred?" asked his lordship.

"I am not your son's keeper, my lord," said I.

"No! By the bye," inquired his lordship, "how is this? I wanted to call upon you about it. I never heard of such a thing in the whole course of my life! What the devil can you possibly have to say against my son Fred?"

"Good heavens! my lord, you frighten me! I never recollect to have said a single word against your son, as long as I have lived. Why should I?"

"Why, indeed!" said Lord Melbourne. "And, since there is nothing to be said against him, what excuse can you make for using him so ill?"

"I don't understand you one bit, my lord." The very idea of a father put me in a tremble.

"Why," said Lord Melbourne, "did you not turn the poor boy out of your house as soon as it was dark, although Craven was in town, and there was not the shadow of an excuse for such treatment?"

At this moment, and before I could recover from

my surprise at the tenderness of some parents, Frederick Lamb, who was almost my shadow, joined us.

"Fred, my boy," said Lord Melbourne, "I'll leave you two together, and I fancy you'll find Miss Wilson more reasonable." He touched his hat to me, as he entered the little gate of the Pavilion, where we had remained stationary from the moment his lordship had accosted me.

Frederick Lamb laughed long, loud, and heartily, at his father's interference. So did I, the moment he was safely out of sight, and then I told him of my answer to the Prince's letter, at which he laughed still more. He was charmed with me, for refusing His Royal Highness.

"Not," said Frederick, "that he is not as handsome and graceful a man as any in England; but I hate the weakness of a woman who knows not how to refuse a prince, merely because he is a prince."

"It is something, too, to be of royal blood," answered I frankly; "and something more to be accomplished: but this posting after a man! I wonder what he could mean by it!"

Frederick Lamb now began to plead his own cause.

"I must soon join my regiment in Yorkshire," said he: he was, at that time aide-de-camp to General Mackenzie: "God knows when we may meet again! I am sure you will not long continue with Lord Craven. I foresee what will happen, and yet, when it does, I think I shall go mad!"

For my part I felt flattered and obliged by the affection Frederick Lamb evinced towards me; but I was still not in love with him.

At length, the time arrived when poor Frederick Lamb could delay his departure from Brighton no longer. On the eve of it he begged to be allowed to introduce his brother William to me.

"What for?" said I.

"That he may let me know how you behave," answered Frederick Lamb.

"And if I fall in love with him?" I inquired.

"I am sure you won't," replied Fred. "Not because my brother William is not likeable; on the contrary, William is much handsomer than I am; but he will not love you as I have done and do still, and you are too good to forget me entirely."

Our parting scene was rather tender. For the last ten days, Lord Craven being absent, we had scarcely been separated an hour during the whole day. I had begun to feel the force of habit, and Frederick Lamb really respected me, for the perseverance with which I had resisted his urgent wishes, when he would have had me deceive Lord Craven. He had ceased to torment me with such wild fits of passion as had at first frightened me, and by these means he had obtained much more of my confidence.

Two days after his departure for Hull, in Yorkshire, Lord Craven returned to Brighton, where he was immediately informed by some spiteful enemy of mine, that I had been during the whole of his absence openly intriguing with Frederick Lamb. In consequence of this information, one evening, when I expected his return, his servant brought me the following letter, dated Lewes:

"A friend of mine has informed me of what has been going on at Brighton. This information, added to what I have seen with my own eyes, of your intimacy with Frederick Lamb, obliges me to declare that we must separate. Let me add, Harriette, that you might have done anything with me, with only a little mere conduct. As it is, allow me to wish you happy, and further, pray inform me, if in any way, *à la distance*, I can promote your welfare.

"CRAVEN."

This letter completed my dislike of Lord Craven. I answered it immediately, as follows:

"MY LORD,—Had I ever wished to deceive you, I have the wit to have done it successfully; but you are old enough to be a better judge of human nature than

to have suspected me of guile or deception. In the plenitude of your condescension, you are pleased to add that I 'might have done anything with you, with only a little mere conduct,' now I say, and from my heart, the Lord defend me from ever doing anything with you again! Adieu,

"HARRIETTE."

My present situation was rather melancholy and embarrassing, and yet I felt my heart the lighter for my release from the cocoa-trees, without its being my own act and deed. "It is my fate!" thought I; "for I never wronged this man. I hate his fine carriage, and his money, and everything belonging to or connected with him. I shall hate cocoa as long as I live; and I am sure I will never enter a boat again if I can help it. This is what one gets by acting with principle."

The next morning, while I was considering what was to become of me, I received a very affectionate letter from Frederick Lamb, dated Hull. He dared not, he said, be selfish enough to ask me to share his poverty, and yet he had a kind of presentiment that he should not lose me.

My case was desperate; for I had taken a vow not to remain another night under Lord Craven's roof. John, therefore, the black whom Craven had, I suppose, imported with his cocoa-trees from the West Indies, was desired to secure me a place in the mail for Hull.

It is impossible to do justice to the joy and rapture which brightened Frederick's countenance, when he flew to receive me and conducted me to his house, where I was shortly visited by his worthy general, Mackenzie, who assured me of his earnest desire to make my stay in Hull as comfortable as possible.

We continued here for about three months, and then came to London. Fred Lamb's passion increased daily; but I discovered, on our arrival in London, that he was a voluptuary, somewhat worldly and

selfish. My comforts were not considered. I lived in extreme poverty, while he contrived to enjoy all the luxuries of life, and suffered me to pass my dreary evenings alone, while he frequented balls, masquerades, &c. Secure of my constancy, he was satisfied—so was not I! I felt that I deserved better from him.

I asked Frederick one day, if the Marquis of Lorne was as handsome as he had been represented to me. "The finest fellow on earth," said Frederick Lamb, "all the women adore him;" and then he went on to relate various anecdotes of his lordship, which strongly excited my curiosity.

Soon after this he quitted town for a few weeks, and I was left alone in London, without money, or at any rate with very little, and Frederick Lamb, who had intruded himself on me at Brighton, and thus been the cause of my separation from Lord Craven, made himself happy; because he believed me faithful and cared not for my distresses.

This idea disgusted me; and in a fit of anger I wrote to the Marquis of Lorne, merely to say that, if he would walk up to Duke's Row, Somers-town, he would meet a most lovely girl.

This was his answer,—

"If you are but half as lovely as you think yourself, you must be well worth knowing; but how is that to be managed? Not in the street! but come to No. 39 Portland-street and ask for me.

"L."

My reply was this,—

"No! our first meeting must be on the high road, in order that I may have room to run away, in case I don't like you.

"HARRIETTE."

The marquis rejoined,—

"Well then, fair lady, to-morrow at four, near the turnpike, look for me on horseback, and then you know I can gallop away.

"L."

We met. The duke—he has since succeeded to the title—did not gallop away; and for my part I had never seen a countenance I had thought half so beautifully expressive. I was afraid to look at it, lest a closer examination might destroy all the new and delightful sensations his first glance had inspired in my breast. His manner was most gracefully soft and polished. We walked together for about two hours.

"I never saw such a sunny, happy countenance as yours in my whole life," said Argyle to me.

"Oh, but I am happier than usual to-day," answered I, very naturally.

Before we parted, the duke knew as much of me and my adventures as I knew myself. He was very anxious to be allowed to call on me.

"And how will your particular friend Frederick Lamb like that?" inquired I.

The duke laughed.

"Well then," said his grace, "do me the honour, some day, to come and dine or sup with me at Argyle House."

"I shall not be able to run away, if I go there," I answered, laughingly, in allusion to my last note.

"Shall you want to run away from me?" said Argyle; and there was something unusually beautiful and eloquent in his countenance, which brought a deep blush into my cheek.

"When we know each other better?" added Argyle, beseechingly. "*En attendant*, will you walk again with me to-morrow?" I assented, and we parted.

I returned to my home in unusual spirits: they were a little damped, however, by the reflection that I had been doing wrong. "I cannot," I reasoned with myself, "I cannot, I fear, become what the world calls a steady, prudent, virtuous woman. That time is past, even if I was ever fit for it. Still I must distinguish myself from those in the like unfortunate situations, by strict probity and love of truth. I will

never become vile. I will always adhere to good faith, as long as anything like kindness or honourable principle is shown towards me: and, when I am ill used, I will leave my lover rather than deceive him.

"Frederick Lamb relies, in perfect confidence, on my honour. True that confidence is the effect of vanity. He believes that a woman who could resist him, as I did at Brighton, is the safest woman on earth! He leaves me alone and without sufficient money for common necessaries.

"No matter; I must tell him to-night, as soon as he arrives from the country, that I have written to and walked with Lorne. My dear mother would never forgive me if I became artful." So mused, and thus reasoned I, till I was interrupted by Frederick Lamb's loud knock at my door.

"He will be in a fine passion," said I to myself, in excessive trepidation; and I was in such a hurry to have it over that I related all immediately. To my equal joy and astonishment Frederick Lamb was not a bit angry. From his manner I could not help guessing that his friend Lorne had often been found a very powerful rival.

I could see through the delight he experienced at the idea of possessing a woman whom, his vanity persuaded him, Argyle would sigh for in vain: and, attacking me on my weak point, he kissed me, and said, "I have the most perfect esteem for my dearest little wife, whom, I can, I know, as safely trust with Argyle as Craven trusted her with me."

"Are you quite sure?" asked I, merely to ease my conscience. "Were it not wiser to advise me not to walk about with him?"

"No, no," said Frederick Lamb; "it is such good fun! bring him up every day to Somers-town and the Jew's Harp house, there to swallow cider and sentiment. Make him walk up here as many times as you can, dear little Harry, for the honour of your sex, and to punish him for declaring, as he always

does, that no woman who will not love him at once is worth his pursuit."

"I am sorry he is such a coxcomb," said I.

"What is that to you, you little fool?"

"True," I replied. And, at the moment, I made a sort of determination not to let the beautiful and voluptuous expression of Argyle's dark blue eyes take possession of my fancy.

"You are a neater figure than the Marquis of Lorne;" said I to Frederick, wishing to think so.

"Lorne is growing fat," answered Frederick Lamb; "but he is the most active creature possible, and appears lighter than any man of his weight I ever saw; and then he is, without any exception, the highest bred man in England."

"And you desire and permit me to walk about the country with him?"

"Yes; do trot him often up here. I want to have a laugh against Lorne."

"And you are not jealous?"

"Not at all," said Frederick Lamb, "for I am secure of your affections."

"I must not deceive this man," thought I, and the idea began to make me a little melancholy. "My only chance, or rather my only excuse, will be his leaving me without the means of existence." This appeared likely; for I was too shy, and too proud to ask for money: and Frederick Lamb encouraged me in this amiable forbearance!

The next morning, with my heart beating unusually high, I attended my appointment with Argyle. I hoped, nay almost expected, to find him there before me. I paraded near the turnpike five minutes, then grew angry; in five more, I became wretched; in five more, downright indignant; and, in five more, wretched again—and so I returned home.

"This," thought I, "shall be a lesson to me hereafter, never to meet a man: it is unnatural:" and yet I had felt it perfectly natural to return to the person

whose society had made me so happy! "No matter," reasoned I, "we females must not suffer love or pleasure to glow in our eyes, until we are quite sure of a return. We must be dignified!"

Alas! I can only be and seem what I am. No doubt my sunny face of joy and happiness, which he talked to me about, was understood, and it has disgusted him. He thought me bold, and yet I am sure I never blushed so much in any man's society before.

I now began to consider myself with feelings of the most painful humility. Suddenly I flew to my writing-desk; "He shall not have the cut all on his side, neither," thought I, with the pride of a child, "I will soon convince him I am not accustomed to be slighted;" and then I wrote to his grace as follows:

"It was very wrong and very bold of me to have sought your acquaintance, in the way I did, my lord; and I entreat you to forgive and to forget my childish folly, as completely as I have forgotten the occasion of it."

"So far so good," thought I, pausing, "but then suppose he should, from this dry note, really believe me so cold and stupid as not to have felt his pleasing qualities. Suppose now it were possible he liked me after all!" Then hastily, and half ashamed of myself, I added these few lines:

"I have not quite deserved this contempt from you, and, in that consolatory reflection, I take my leave; not in anger my lord, but only with the steady determination so to profit by the humiliating lesson you have given me as never to expose myself to the like contempt again.

"Your most obedient servant,

"HARRIETTE WILSON."

Having put my letter into the post, I passed a restless night: and the next morning, heard the knock of the twopenny postman in extreme agita-

tion. He brought me, as I suspected, an answer from Argyle, which is subjoined.

"You are not half vain enough, dear Harriette. You ought to have been quite certain that any man who had once met you could not fail in a second appointment but from unavoidable accident—and, if you were only half as pleased with Thursday morning, as I was, you will meet me to-morrow in the same place at four. Pray, pray, come.

"LORNE."

I kissed the letter and put it into my bosom, grateful for the weight it had taken off my heart. Not that I was so far gone in love as my readers may imagine; but I had suffered from wounded pride, and, in fact, I was very much *tête monté*.

The sensations which Argyle had inspired me with were the warmest, nay, the first, of the same nature, I had ever experienced. Nevertheless, I could not forgive him quite so easily as this neither. I recollect what Frederick Lamb had said about his vanity. "No doubt," thought I, "he thinks it was nothing to have paraded me up and down that stupid turnpike road, in the vain hope of seeing him. It shall now be his turn: and I gloried in the idea of revenge."

The hour of Argyle's appointment drew nigh, arrived, and passed away, without my leaving my house. To Frederick Lamb I related everything, presented him with Argyle's letter, and acquainted him with my determination not to meet his grace.

"How good!" said Frederick Lamb, quite delighted. "We dine together to-day at Lady Holland's, and I mean to ask him, before everybody at table, what he thinks of the air about the turnpike in Somerstown."

The next day I was surprised by a letter, not, as I anticipated, from Argyle, but from the late Tom Sheridan, only son of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. I had, by mere accident, become acquainted with that very interesting young man when quite a child, from

the circumstance of his having paid great attention to one of my elder sisters.

He requested me to allow him to speak a few words to me, wherever I pleased. Frederick Lamb having gone to Brockett Hall in Hertfordshire, I desired him to call on me.

"I am come from my friend Lorne," said Tom Sheridan. "I would not have intruded on you; but that, poor fellow, he is really annoyed, and he has commissioned me to acquaint you with the accident which obliged him to break his appointment; because I can best vouch for the truth of it, having upon my honour, with my own ears, heard the Prince of Wales invite Lord Lorne to Carlton House at the very moment when he was about to meet you in Somers-town. Lorne," continued Tom Sheridan, "desires me to say, that he is not coxcomb enough to imagine you cared for him; but in justice, he wants to stand exactly where he did in your opinion, before he broke his appointment: he was so perfectly innocent on that subject. 'I would write to her,' said he, again and again, 'but that, in all probability, my letters would be shown to Frederick Lamb, and be laughed at by them both. I would call on her, in spite of the devil; but that I know not where she lives.'

"I asked Argyle," Tom Sheridan proceeded, "how he had addressed his last letters to you? 'To the post office in Somers-town,' was his answer, 'and thence they were forwarded to Harriette.'" (He had tried to bribe the old woman there, to obtain my address, but she abused him, and turned him out of her shop.) "'It is very hard,'" continued Tom, repeating the words of his noble friend, "'to lose the good-will of one of the nicest, cleverest girls I ever met with in my life, who was, I am certain, civilly if not kindly disposed towards me, by such a mere accident.' Therefore," continued Tom Sheridan, smiling, "you'll make it up with Lorne, won't you?"

"There is nothing to forgive," said I, "if no slight was meant. In short you are making too much of

me, and spoiling me, by all this explanation ; for, indeed, I had at first been less indignant, but that I fancied his grace neglected me because——" and I hesitated, while I could feel myself blush deeply.

"Because what?" asked Tom Sheridan.

"Nothing;" I replied, looking at my shoes.

"What a pretty girl you are," observed Sheridan, "particularly when you blush."

"Fiddlestick!" said I, laughing, "you know you always preferred my sister Fanny."

"Well," replied Tom, "there I plead guilty. Fanny is the sweetest creature on earth ; but you are all a race of finished coquettes, who delight in making fools of people.

"Now can anything come up to your vanity in writing to Lorne, that you are the most beautiful creature on earth?"

"Never mind," said I, "you set all that to rights. I was never vain in your society, in my life."

"I would give the world for a kiss, at this moment," said Tom ; "because you look so humble, and so amiable ; but"—recollecting himself—"this is not exactly the embassy I came upon. Have you a mind to give Lorne an agreeable surprise?"

"I don't know."

"Upon my honour I believe he is downright in love with you."

"Well?"

"Come into a hackney-coach with me, and we will drive down to the Tennis Court, in the Haymarket."

"Is the duke there?"

"Yes."

"But—at all events, I will not trust myself in a hackney-coach with you."

"There was a time," said poor Tom Sheridan, with much drollery of expression, "there was a time—but now!" and he shook his handsome head with comic gravity, "but now! you may drive with me from here to St. Paul's in the most perfect safety. I will tell you a secret," added he, and he fixed his

fine dark eye on my face while he spoke, in a tone, half merry, half desponding, "I am dying; but nobody knows it yet!"

I was very much affected by his manner of saying this.

"My dear Mr. Sheridan," said I, with earnest warmth, "you have accused me of being vain of the little beauty God has given me. Now I would give it all, or upon my word I think I would, to obtain the certainty, that you would from this hour refrain from such excesses as are destroying you."

"Did you see me play the methodist parson, in a tub, at Mrs. Beaumont's masquerade last Thursday?" said Tom, with affected levity.

"You may laugh as you please," said I, "at a little fool like me pretending to preach to you, yet I am sensible enough to admire you, and quite feeling enough to regret your time so misspent, your brilliant talents so misapplied."

"Bravo! Bravo!" Tom reiterated, "what a funny little girl you are! Pray Miss, how is your time spent?"

"Not in drinking brandy," I replied.

"And how might your talent be applied, Ma'am?"

"Have not I just given you a specimen, in the shape of a handsome quotation?"

"My good little girl,—it is in the blood, and I can't help it,—and, if I could, it is too late now. I'm dying, I tell you. I know not if my poor father's physician was as eloquent as you are; but he did his best to turn him from drinking. Among other things, he declared to him one day, that the brandy, Arquebusade, and Eau de Cologne, he swallowed, would burn off the coat of his stomach. 'Then,' said my father, 'my stomach must digest in its waistcoat; for I cannot help it.'"

"Indeed, I am very sorry for you," I replied: and I hope he believed me: for he pressed my hand hastily, and I think I saw a tear glisten in his bright, dark eye.

"Shall I tell Lorne," said poor Tom, with an effort to recover his usual gaiety, "that you will write to him, or will you come to the Tennis-court?"

"Neither," answered I, "but you may tell his lordship, that, of course, I am not angry, since I am led to believe he had no intention to humble nor make a fool of me."

"Nothing more?" inquired Tom.

"Nothing," I replied, "for his lordship."

"And what for me?" said Tom.

"You! what do you want?"

"A kiss!" he said.

"Not I, indeed!"

"Be it so then; and yet you and I may never meet again on this earth, and just now I thought you felt some interest about me"; and he was going away.

"So I do, dear Tom Sheridan!" said I, detaining him; for I saw death had fixed his stamp on poor Sheridan's handsome face. "You know I have a very warm and feeling heart, and taste enough to admire and like you; but why is this to be our last meeting?"

"I must go to the Mediterranean"; poor Sheridan continued, putting his hand to his chest, and coughing.

"To die!" thought I, as I looked on his sunk, but still very expressive, dark eyes.

"Then God bless you!" said I, first kissing his hand, and then, though somewhat timidly, leaning my face towards him. He parted my hair, and kissed my forehead, my eyes, and my lips.

"If I do come back," said he, forcing a languid smile, "mind let me find you married, and rich enough to lend me an occasional hundred pounds or two." He then kissed his hand gracefully, and was out of sight in an instant.

I never saw him again!

CHAPTER II

THE next morning my maid brought me a little note from Argyle to say that he had been waiting about my door an hour, having learned my address from poor Sheridan, and that, seeing the servant in the street, he could not help making an attempt to induce me to go out and walk with him. I looked out of window, saw Argyle, ran for my hat and cloak, and joined him in an instant.

"Am I forgiven?" said Argyle with gentle eagerness.

"Oh yes," returned I, "long ago, but that will do you no good, for I really am treating Frederick Lamb very ill, and therefore must not walk with you again."

"Why not?" Argyle inquired. "Apropos," he added, "you told Frederick that I walked about the turnpike looking for you, and that, no doubt, to make him laugh at me?"

"No, not for that; but I never could deceive any man. I have told him the whole story of our becoming acquainted, and he allows me to walk with you. It is I who think it wrong, not Frederick."

"That is to say, you think me a bore," said Argyle, reddening with pique and disappointment.

"And suppose I loved you?" I asked; "still I am engaged to Frederick Lamb, who trusts me, and——"

"If," interrupted Argyle, "it were possible you did love me, Frederick Lamb would be forgotten: but, though you did not love me, you must promise

to try and do so some day or other. You don't know how much I have fixed my heart on it."

These sentimental walks continued more than a month. One evening we walked rather later than usual. It grew dark. In a moment of ungovernable passion, Argyle's ardour frightened me. Not that I was insensible to it: so much the contrary, that I felt certain another meeting must decide my fate. Still I was offended at what I conceived showed such a want of respect. The duke became humble. There is a charm in the humility of a lover who has offended. The charm is so great that we like to prolong it. In spite of all he could say I left him in anger. The next morning I received the following note:

"If you see me waiting about your door to-morrow morning, do not fancy I am looking for you: but for your pretty housemaid."

I did see him from a sly corner of my window; but I resisted all my desires and remained concealed. "I dare not see him again," thought I, "for I cannot be so very profligate, knowing and feeling as I do, how impossible it will be to refuse him anything, if we meet again. I cannot treat Fred Lamb in this manner! besides I should be afraid to tell him of it: he would perhaps kill me!

"But then, poor, dear Lorne! to return his kisses, as I did last night, and afterwards be so very severe on him, for a passion which it seemed so out of his power to control!

"Nevertheless we must part now, or never; so I'll write and take my leave of him kindly." This was my letter:

"At the first I was afraid I should love you, and but for Fred Lamb having requested me to get you up to Somers-town after I had declined meeting you, I had been happy: now the idea makes me miserable. Still it must be so. I am naturally affectionate.

Habit attaches me to Fred Lamb. I cannot deceive him or acquaint him with what will cause him to cut me, in anger and for ever. We may not then meet again Lorne, as hitherto: for now we could not be merely friends: lovers we must be hereafter, or nothing. I have never loved any man in my life before, and yet, dear Lorne, you see we must part. I venture to send you the enclosed thick lock of my hair; because you have been good enough to admire it. I do not care how I have disfigured my head since you are not to see it again.

"God bless you, Lorne. Do not quite forget last night, directly, and believe me, as in truth I am,

"Most devotedly yours,

"HARRIETTE."

This was his answer, written, I suppose, in some pique:

"True you have given me many sweet kisses, and a lock of your beautiful hair. All this does not convince me you are one bit in love with me. I am the last man on earth to desire you to do violence to your feelings by leaving a man as dear to you as Frederick Lamb is, so farewell Harriette. I shall not intrude to offend you again.

"LORNE."

"Poor Lorne is unhappy and, what is worse," thought I, "he will soon hate me!" The idea made me wretched. However, I will do myself the justice to say, that I have seldom, in the whole course of my life, been tempted by my passions or my fancies to what my heart and conscience told me was wrong. I am afraid my conscience has been a very easy one; but certainly I have followed its dictates. There was a want of heart and delicacy, I always thought, in leaving any man, without full and very sufficient reasons for it. At the same time, my dear mother's marriage had proved to me so forcibly the miseries of two people of contrary opinions and character

torturing each other to the end of their natural lives, that, before I was ten years old, I decided in my own mind to live free as air from any restraint but that of my conscience.

Frederick Lamb's love was now increasing, as all men's do, from gratified vanity. He sometimes passed an hour in reading to me. Till then, I had no idea of the gratification to be derived from books. In my convent in France I had read only sacred dramas; at home, my father's mathematical books, *Buchan's Medicine*, *Gil Blas*, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, formed our whole library. The two latter I had long known by heart, and could repeat at this moment.

My sisters used to subscribe to little circulating libraries in the neighbourhood, for the common novels of the day; but I always hated these. Fred Lamb's choice was happy, Milton, Shakespeare, Byron, *The Rambler*, Virgil, &c. "I must know all about these Greeks and Romans," said I to myself. "Some day I will go into the country quite alone, and study like mad. I am too young now."

In the meantime, I was absolutely charmed with Shakespeare. Music I always had a natural talent for. I played well on the pianoforte; that is, with taste and execution; though almost without study.

There was a very elegant looking woman residing in my neighbourhood, in a beautiful little cottage, who had long excited my curiosity. She appeared to be the mother of five extremely beautiful children. These were always to be seen, with their nurse, walking out, most fancifully dressed. Every one used to stop to admire them. Their mother seemed to live in the most complete retirement. I never saw her with anybody besides her children.

One day our eyes met: she smiled, and I half bowed. The next day we met again, and the lady wished me a good morning. We soon got into conversation. I asked her if she did not lead a very solitary life.

"You are the first female I have spoken to for four years," said the lady, "with the exception of my own servants; but," added she, "some day we may know each other better. In the meantime will you trust yourself to come and dine with me to-day?"

"With great pleasure," I replied, "if you think me worthy that honour."

We then separated to dress for dinner.

When I entered her drawing-room at the hour she had appointed, I was struck with the elegant taste, more than with the richness of the furniture. A beautiful harp, drawings of a somewhat voluptuous cast, elegant needle-work, Moore's poems, and a fine pianoforte, formed a part of it. "She is not a bad woman—and she is not a good woman," said I to myself. "What can she be?"

The lady now entered the room, and welcomed me with an appearance of real pleasure. "I am not quite sure," said she, "whether I can have the pleasure of introducing you to Mr. Johnstone to-day, or not. We will not wait dinner for him, if he does not arrive in time." This was the first word I had heard about a Mr. Johnstone, although I knew the lady was called by that name.

Just as we were sitting down to dinner Mr. Johnstone arrived and was introduced to me. He was a particularly elegant, handsome man, about forty years of age. His manner of addressing Mrs. Johnstone was more that of an humble romantic lover than of a husband; yet Julia, for so he called her, could be no common woman. I could not endure all this mystery, and, when he left us in the evening, I frankly asked Julia, for so we will call her in future, why she invited a strange madcap girl like me, to dinner with her.

"Consider the melancholy life I lead," said Julia.

"Thank you for the compliment," answered I.

"But do you believe," interrupted Julia, "that I should have asked you to dine with me, if I had not been particularly struck and pleased with you? I

had, as I passed your window, heard you touch the pianoforte with a very masterly hand, and, therefore, I conceived that you were not uneducated, and I knew that you led almost as retired a life as myself. *Au reste*," continued Julia, "some day, perhaps soon, you shall know all about me."

I did not press the matter further at that moment, believing it would be indelicate.

"Shall we go to the nursery?" asked Julia.

I was delighted; and, romping with her lovely children, dressing their dolls, and teaching them to skip, I forgot my love for Argyle, as much as if that excellent man had never been born.

Indeed I am not quite sure that it would have occurred to me, even when I went home, but that Fred Lamb, who was just at this period showing Argyle up all over the town as my amorous shepherd, had a new story to relate of his grace.

Horace Beckford and two other fashionable men, who had heard from Frederick of my cruelty as he termed it, and the duke's daily romantic walks to the Jew's Harp House, had come upon him by accident in a body, as they were galloping through Somerstown. Lorne was sitting in a very pastoral fashion on a gate near my door, whistling. They saluted him with a loud laugh. No man could, generally speaking, parry a joke better than Argyle: for few knew the world better: but this was no joke. He had been severely wounded and annoyed by my cutting his acquaintance altogether, at the very moment when he had reason to believe that the passion he really felt for me was returned. It was almost the first instance of the kind he had ever met with. He was bored and vexed with himself for the time he had lost, and yet he found himself continually in my neighbourhood, almost before he was aware of it. He wanted, as he has told me since, to meet me once more by accident, and then he declared he would give me up.

"What a set of consummate asses you are" said

Argyle to Beckford and his party; and then quietly continued on the gate, whistling as before.

"But r-e-a-l-l-y, r-e-a-l-l-y, ca-ca-cannot Tom She-She-She-Sheridan assist you, marquis?" said the handsome Horace Beckford, in his usual stammering way.

"A very good joke for Fred Lamb, as the case stands now," replied the duke, laughing: for a man of the world must laugh in these cases, though he should burst with the effort.

"Why don't she come?" said Sir John Shelley, who was one of the party.

An odd mad-looking Frenchman, in a white coat and a white hat, well known about Somers-town, passed at this moment and observed his grace, whom he knew well by sight, from the other side of the way. He had, a short time before, attempted to address me when he met me walking alone, and inquired of me when I had last seen the Marquis of Lorne, with whom he had often observed me walking. I made him no answer. In a fit of frolic, as if everybody combined at this moment against the poor, dear, handsome Argyle, the Frenchman called, as loud as he could scream, from the other side of the way, "*Ah! ah! oh! oh! vous voilà, monsieur le Comte Dromedaire*," alluding thus to the duke's family name, as pronounced Camel. "*Mais ou est donc madame la Comtesse?*"

"D——d impudent rascal!" said Argyle, delighted to vent his growing rage on somebody, and started across the road after the poor thin old Frenchman, who might have now said his prayers had not his spider-legs served him better than his courage.

Fred Lamb was very angry with me for not laughing at this story; but the only feeling it excited in me was unmixed gratitude towards the duke for remembering me still, and for having borne all this ridicule for my sake.

The next day Julia returned my visit; and, before we parted, she had learned from my usual frankness

every particular of my life, without leaving me one atom the wiser as to what related to herself. I disliked mystery so much that, but that I saw Julia's proceeded from the natural, extreme shyness of her disposition, I had by this time declined continuing her acquaintance. I decided however to try her another month, in order to give her time to become acquainted with me. She was certainly one of the best mannered women in England, not excepting even those of the very highest rank. Her handwriting and her style were both beautiful. She had the most delicately fair skin, and the prettiest arms, hands and feet, and the most graceful form, which could well be imagined; but her features were not regular, nor their expression particularly good. She struck me as a woman of very violent passions, combined with an extremely shy and reserved disposition.

Mr. Johnstone seldom made his appearance oftener than twice a week. He came across a retired field to her house, though he might have got there more conveniently by the roadway. I sometimes accompanied her, and we sat on a gate to watch his approach to this field. Their meetings were full of rapturous and romantic delight. In his absence she never received a single visitor, male or female, except myself; yet she always, when quite alone, dressed in the most studied and fashionable style.

There was something dramatic about Julia. I often surprised her, hanging over her harp so very gracefully, the room so perfumed, the rays of her lamp so soft, that I could scarcely believe this *tout ensemble* to be the effect of chance or habit. It appeared arranged for the purpose like a scene in a play. Yet who was it to affect? Julia never either received or expected company!

Everything went on as usual for another month or two; during which time Julia and I met every day, and she promised shortly to make me acquainted with her whole history. My finances were now sinking very low. Everything Lord Craven had given me, whether

in money or valuables, I had freely parted with for my support. "Fred Lamb," I thought, "must know that these resources cannot last for ever; therefore I am determined not to speak to him on the subject."

I was lodging with a comical old widow, who had formerly been my sister Fanny's nurse when she was quite a child. This good lady, I believe, really did like me, and had already given me all the credit for board and lodging she could possibly afford. She now entered my room, and acquainted me that she actually had not another shilling, either to provide my dinner or her own.

"Necessity hath no law,' thought I, my eyes brightening, and my determination being fixed in an instant. In ten minutes more the following letter was in the post-office, directed to the Marquis of Lorne.

"If you still desire my society, I will sup with you to-morrow evening, in your own house.

"Yours, ever affectionately,

"HARRIETTE."

I knew perfectly well that, on the evening I mentioned to his grace, Fred Lamb would be at his father's country house, Brockett Hall.

The Duke's answer was brought to me by his groom, as soon as he had received my letter; it ran thus:

"Are you really serious? I dare not believe it. Say, by my servant, that you will see me at the turnpike directly, for five minutes, only to put me out of suspense. I will not believe anything you write on this subject. I want to look at your eyes while I hear you say yes.

"Yours, most devotedly and impatiently,

"LORNE."

I went to our old place of rendezvous to meet the duke. How different, and how much more amiable, was his reception than that of Fred Lamb in Hull!

The latter, all wild passion; the former, gentle, voluptuous, fearful of shocking or offending me, or frightening away my growing passion. In short, while the duke's manner was almost as timid as my own, the expression of his eyes and the very soft tone of his voice troubled my imagination, and made me fancy something of bliss beyond all reality.

We agreed that he should bring a carriage to the old turnpike, and thence conduct me to his house.

"If you should change your mind!" said the duke, returning a few steps after we had taken leave:—"*Mais tu viendras, mon ange? Tu ne sera pas si cruelle?*"

Argyle is the best Frenchman I have met with in England, and poor Tom Sheridan was the second best.

"And you," said I to Argyle, "suppose you were to break your appointment to-night?"

"Would you regret it?" Argyle inquired. "I won't have your answer while you are looking at those pretty little feet;" he continued. "Tell me, dear Harriette, should you be sorry?"

"Yes," said I, softly, and our eyes met, only for an instant. Lorne's gratitude was expressed merely by pressing my hand.

"*A ce soir donc*," said he, mounting his horse; and, waving his hand to me, he was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER III

I WILL not say in what particular year of his life the Duke of Argyle succeeded with me. Ladies scorn dates! Dates make ladies nervous and stories dry. Be it only known then, that it was just at the end of his Lorne shifts and his lawn shirts. It was at that critical period of his life, when his whole and sole possessions appeared to consist in three dozen of ragged lawn shirts, with embroidered collars, well fringed in his service; a threadbare suit of snuff colour, a little old hat with very little binding left, an old horse, an old groom, an old carriage, and an old chateau. It was to console himself for all this antiquity, I suppose, that he fixed upon so very young a mistress as myself. Thus, after having gone through all the routine of sighs, vows, and rural walks, he at last saw me blooming and safe in his dismal *château* in Argyle-street.

A late hour in the morning blushed to find us in the arms of each other, as Monk Lewis or somebody else says; but the morning was pale when compared with the red on my cheek when I, the very next day, acquainted Fred Lamb with my adventure!

Fred was absolutely dumb from astonishment, and half choked with rage and pride. I would not plead my poverty; for I conceived that common sense and common humanity ought to have made this a subject of attention and inquiry to him.

"You told me, he was, when he pleased, irresistible," said I.

"Yes, yes, yes," muttered Fred Lamb, between his closed teeth; "but a woman who loves a man is

blind to the perfections of every other. No matter, no matter, I am glad it has happened. I wish you joy. I——"

"Did I ever tell you I was in love with you?" said I, interrupting him. "Indeed it was your vanity deceived you, not I. You caused me to lose Lord Craven's protection, and, therefore, loving no man at the time, having never loved any, to you I went. I should have felt the affection of a sister for you, but that you made no sacrifices, no single attempt to contribute to my comfort or happiness. I will be the mere instrument of pleasure to no man. He must make a friend and companion of me, or he will lose me."

Fred Lamb left me in madness and fury; but I knew him selfish, and that he could dine on every imagined luxury, and drink his champagne, without a thought or care whether I had bread and cheese to satisfy hunger. Then who, with love, first love! beating in their hearts, could think of Frederick Lamb?

I immediately changed my lodgings for a furnished house at the west end of the town, better calculated to receive my new lover, whose passion knew no bounds. He often told me how much more beautiful I was than he had ever expected to find me.

"I cannot," he wrote to me, during a short absence from town, "I cannot, for circumstances prevent my being entirely yours"—I fancied he alluded to his old flame, Lady W——, with whom, the world said he had been intriguing nineteen years, "but nothing can, nor shall, prevent my being, for ever, your friend, &c. &c. &c."

"If," thought I, "this man is not to be entirely mine, perhaps I shall not be entirely his." I could have been—but this nasty Lady W——destroys half my illusion. He used to sit with her, in her box at the Opera, and wear a chain which I believed to be hers. He often came to me from the Opera, with just such a rose in his bosom as I had

seen in hers. All this was a dead bore. One night I plucked the rose from his breast, another time I hid the chain, and all this to him seemed the effect of pure accident: for who, with pride, and youth, and beauty, would admit they were jealous?

One night, I am sure he will recollect that night, when he thought me mad, one night I say, I could not endure the idea of Lady W——. That night we were at Argyle House, and he really seemed most passionately fond of me. The idea suddenly crossed my mind that all the tenderness and passion he seemed to feel for me was shared between myself and Lady W——.

I could not bear it.

"I shall go home," I said, suddenly.

"Going home!" said the duke. "Why my dear little Harriette, you are walking in your sleep"; and he threw on his dressing-gown, and took hold of my hand.

"I am not asleep," said I; "but I will not stay here; I cannot. I would rather die:" and I burst into tears.

"My dear, dear Harriette," continued Argyle, in great alarm, "for God's sake, tell me what on earth I have done to offend you?"

"Nothing—nothing," said I, drying my tears. "I have but one favour to ask: let me alone, instead of persecuting me with all this show of tenderness."

"Gracious God!" said Argyle, "how you torment me! If," he proceeded, after pausing, "if you have ceased to love me,—if—if you are disgusted——"

I was silent.

"Do speak! pray, pray!" said he.

His agitation astonished me. It almost stopped his breathing. "This man," thought I, "is either very nervous or he loves me just as I want to be loved." I had my hand on the door, to leave him. He took hold of me, and threw me from it with some violence; locked it and snatched the key out; took

me in his arms and pressed me with almost savage violence against his breast.

"By heavens!" said he, "you shall not torture me so another moment."

This wildness frightened me. "He is going to kill me," thought I. I fixed my eyes on his face, to try and read my doom. Our eyes met, he pushed me gently from him, and burst into tears.

My jealousy was at an end, *au moins pour le moment.*

"I am not tired of you, dear Lorne," said I, kissing him eagerly. "How is it possible to be so? Dear Lorne, forgive me?"

Nothing was so bright nor so brilliant as Lorne's smile through a tear. In short, Lorne's expression of countenance, I say it now, when I neither esteem, nor love, nor like him, his expression, I say, is one of the finest things in nature.

Our reconciliation was completed, in the usual way.

The next morning, I was greatly surprised by a visit from my dear, lively sister Fanny, on her arrival from the country. Fanny was the most popular woman I ever met with. The most ill-natured and spiteful of her sex could never find it in their hearts to abuse one who, in their absence, warmly fought all their battles, whenever anybody complained of them where she was.

I often asked her why she defended, in society, certain unamiable persons.

"Merely because they are not here to defend themselves, and therefore it is two to one against them," said Fanny.

Fanny, as the Marquis of Hertford uniformly insisted, was the most beautiful of all our family. He was very desirous of having her portrait painted by Lawrence, to place it in his own apartment. "That laughing dark blue eye of hers," he would say, "is unusually beautiful." His lordship, by the bye, whatever people may say of the coldness of his heart,

entertained a real friendship for poor Fanny; and proved it by every kind attention to her, during her last illness. He was the only man she admitted into her room to take leave of her before she died, although hundreds, and those of the first rank and character, were sincerely desirous of doing so. I remember Lord Yarmouth's last visit to Brompton, where my poor sister died after an illness of three weeks. "Can I, or my cook, do anything in the world to be useful to her?" said he. I repeated that it was all too late —that she would never desire anything more, and all I wanted for her was plenty of Eau de Cologne to wash her temples with; that being all she asked for. He did not send his groom for it; but galloped to town himself, and was back immediately. This was something for Lord Yarmouth.

But to proceed, Fanny was certainly very beautiful; she had led a most retired, steady life for seven years, and was the mother of three children at the death of their father, Mr. Woodcock, to whom Fanny would have been married could he have obtained a divorce from his wife. Everybody was mad about Fanny, and so they had been during Mr. Woodcock's life; but it was all in vain. Now there was a better chance for them perhaps.

Fanny and our new acquaintance Julia soon became sworn friends. Most people believed that we were three sisters. Many called us the Three Graces. It was a pity that there were only three Graces!—and that is the reason, I suppose, why my eldest sister Amy was cut out of this ring, and often surnamed one of the Furies. She was a fine dark woman too. Why she hated me all her life I cannot conceive; nor why she invariably tried to injure me in the opinion of all those who liked me, I know not: but I can easily divine why she made love to my favourites; for they were the handsomest she could find. It was Amy, my eldest sister, who had been the first to set us a bad example. We were all virtuous girls when Amy, one fine afternoon, left her

father's house and sallied forth, like Don Quixote, in quest of adventures. The first person who addressed her was one Mr. Trench; a certain short-sighted, pedantic man, whom most people know about town. I believe she told him that she was running away from her father. All I know for certain is that, when Fanny and I discovered her abode, we went to visit her, and when we asked her what on earth had induced her to throw herself away on an entire stranger whom she had never seen before, her answer was, "I refused him the whole of the first day; had I done so the second he would have been in a fever."

Amy was really very funny, however spitefully disposed towards me. To be brief with her history. Trench put her to school again, from motives of virtue and economy. From that school she eloped with General Maddan.

Amy's virtue was something like the nine lives of a cat.

With General Maddan she, for several years, professed constancy; indeed I am not quite certain that she was otherwise. I never in my occasional visits saw anything suspicious except once, a pair of breeches!

It was one day when I went to call on her with my brother. General Maddan was not in town. She wanted to go to the Opera. The fit had only just seized her, at past nine o'clock. She begged me to make her brother's excuse at home as, she said, he must accompany her.

"What, in those dirty boots?" I asked.

"I have got both dress-stockings and breeches upstairs, of Maddan's," replied Amy; and I assisted at the boy's toilette.

In handing him the black pair of breeches, which Amy had presented me with, I saw marked, in Indian ink, what, being in the inside, had probably escaped her attention. It was simply the name of Proby.

"How came Lord Proby's black small-clothes here?" said I.

Amy snatched them out of my hand in a fury; and desired me to go out of the house. *Au reste*, she had often, at that time, three hundred pounds in her pocket at once, and poor Maddan had not a shilling. All this happened before I had left my home.

At the period I now write about I believe that Maddan was abroad, and Amy lived in York Place, where she used to give gay evening parties to half the fashionable men in town, after the Opera. She never came to me but from interested motives. Sometimes she forced herself into my private box, or teased me to make her known to the Duke of Argyle.

This year we three graces, as we were called, hired an opera box for the season together. Amy had another, near us, for herself and her host of beaux. Her suppers on Saturday nights were very gay Julia and Fanny were always invited; but she was puzzled what to do with me. If I was present, at least half the men were on my side of the room; if I stayed away, so did all those who went only on my account.

This difficulty became a real privation to such men as delighted in us both together. Among these was Luttrell; everybody knows Luttrell; or if they do not, I will tell them more about him by-and-by. Luttrell, I say, undertook to draw up a little agreement, stating that, since public parties ought not to suffer from private differences, we were thereby requested to engage ourselves to bow to each other in all societies, going through the forms of good breeding even with more ceremony than if we had liked each other, on pain of being voted public nuisances, and private enemies to all wit and humour.

Signed with our hands and seals . . .

"Now," said Fanny one day to Julia, soon after our first opera season had begun, "Harriette and I propose cutting you Mrs. Julia altogether if you do not, this very evening, give us a full and true account of yourself, from the day you were born and the date thereof up to this hour."

"No dates! no dates! I pray!" said Julia.

"Well, waive dates," added I, "and begin."

Julia then related, in her shy, quiet way, what I will communicate as briefly as possible.

Julia's real name was Storer. She was the daughter of the Honourable Mrs. Storer, who was one of the maids of honour to our present king's royal mother, and the sister of Lord Carysfort.

Julia received part of her education in France, and finished it at the palace of Hampton Court, where her mother sent her on a visit to the wife of Colonel Cotton, who was an officer in the 10th Dragoons.

Mrs. Cotton had a family of nine children, and very little fortune to support them. Julia had been, from her earliest youth, encouraging the most romantic passions which ever fired a youthful breast. With all this her heart, unlike mine, was as cold as her imagination was warm. What were parents, what were friends to her? What was anything on earth to love?

The first night Colonel Cotton danced with her she was mad! In four months more she was pregnant. In nine months more, having concealed her situation, she was seized with the pangs of labour, while in the act of paying her respects to Her Majesty in court! And all was consternation in the *beau château de Hampton!*

Mrs. Cotton, instead of sending for the accoucheur, with extreme propriety, though somewhat *mal-apropos*, loaded poor Julia with abuse!

"Have yet a little mercy," said Julia, "and send for assistance."

"Never, never, you monster! you wretch! will I so disgrace your family," exclaimed Mrs. Cotton.

Poor Julia's sufferings were short, but dreadfully severe. In about five hours, unassisted, she became the mother of a fine boy.

Julia could not attempt to describe the rage and fury either of her mother or brother. It was harsh, it was shocking, even as applied to the most hardened sinner, in such a state of mental and bodily suffering. Julia was, with her infant, by her noble relatives

hurried into the country, almost at the risk of her life, and Colonel Cotton was called out by young Storer, Julia's brother, and, I believe, wounded.

From her retirement, Julia had contrived to write to Colonel Cotton, by means of Colonel Thomas, to declare to him that, if they were to meet no more, she would immediately destroy herself. In short, Cotton was raving mad for Julia, and Julia was wild for Cotton—*le moyen de les séparer?*

A very retired cottage near town was hired by Cotton for Julia, who inherited a small fortune over which her parents had no control; and on that she had supported herself in the closest retirement for more than eight years, when I accidentally became acquainted with her. Cotton was dismissed from his regiment by his royal commander.

I never saw such romantic people, after nine years and five children!

"Julia! adored Julia!" so he would write to her, "if you love but as I do, we shall, to-morrow at eight in the evening, enjoy another hour of perfect bliss! Julia! angel Julia! my certain death would be the consequence of your inconstancy, &c. &c."

Julia used to show me these rhapsodies from Cotton, at which I always laughed heartily, and thus I used to put her in a passion continually.

At the opera I learned to be a complete flirt; for there I saw Argyle incessantly with Lady W——, and there it became incumbent on me either to laugh or cry. I let him see me flirt and look tender on Lord Burghersh one night on purpose, and the next day, when we three graces met him in the park, I placed in his hand a letter, which he was hastily concealing in his pocket with a look of gratified vanity, believing no doubt that it was one of my soft effusions on the beauty of his eyes.

"For the post," said I, nodding as we were turning to leave him, and we all three burst into a loud laugh together.

The letter was addressed to Lord Burghersh,

merely to tell him to join us at Amy's after the next opera.

The next opera was unusually brilliant. Amy's box was close to ours, and almost as soon as we were seated she entered, dressed in the foreign style, which became her, accompanied by Counts Woronzow, Beckendorff and Orloff. Beckendorf was half mad for her and wanted to marry her with his left hand.

"Why not with the right?" said Amy.

"I dare not," answered Beckendorff, "without the consent of the Emperor of Russia."

Amy had desired him to go to Russia and obtain this consent from the Emperor more than a month before; but still he lingered!

Our box was soon so crowded that I was obliged to turn one out as fast as a new face appeared. Julia and Fanny left me, to pay a visit to the "enemy," as Luttrell used to call Amy. Observing me for an instant alone, the Duke of Devonshire came into my box, believing that he did me honour.

"Duke," said I, "you cut me in Piccadilly to-day."

"Don't you know," said thickhead, "don't you know, *Belle Harriette*, that I am blind as well as deaf, and a little absent too?"

"My good young man," said I, out of all patience, "*allez donc à l'hôpital des invalides:* for really, if God has made you blind and deaf, you must be absolutely insufferable when you presume to be absent too. The least you can do, as a blind, deaf man, is surely to pay attention to those who address you."

"I never heard anything half so severe as *la belle Harriette*," drawled out the duke.

Luttrell now peeped his nose into my box, and said, dragging in his better half, half-brother I mean, fat Nugent, "A vacancy for two! How happens this? You'll lose your character, Harriette."

"I'm growing stupid, from sympathy, I suppose," I observed, glancing at his grace, who, being as deaf as a post, poor fellow, bowed to me for the supposed compliment.

"You sup with Amy, I hope?" said I to Luttrell. "And you?" turning to Nugent.

"There's a princess in the way," replied Nugent, alluding to the late Queen.

"Nonsense," said Luttrell, "Her Royal Highness has allowed me to be off."

"You can take liberties with her," Nugent remarked. "You great wits can do what you please. She would take it very ill of me; besides, I wish Amy would send some of those dirty Russians away. Count Orloff is the greatest beast in nature."

Lord Alvanly now entered my box.

"*Place pour un*," said I, taking hold of the back of the Duke of Devonshire's chair.

"I am going," said his grace; "but seriously, Harriette, I want to accomplish dining alone some evening, on purpose to pay you a visit."

"There will be no harm in that," said I.

"None! None!" answered Luttrell, who took my allusion.

Alvanly brought me a tall, well-dressed foreigner, whom he was waiting to present to me as "his friend."

"That won't do, Lord Alvanly," said I; "really, that is no introduction, and less recommendation. Name your friend, or away with him."

"*Ma foi, madame*," said the foreigner, "*un nom ne fait rien du tout. Vous me voyez là, madame, honnête homme, de cinq pieds et neuf pouces.*"

"*Madame est persuadé de vos cinq pieds, mais elle n'est pas si sure de vos neuf pouces*," Alvanly observed.

"Adieu, *ma belle Harriette*," said the duke, at last taking my hint and rising to depart.

Julia and Fanny now returned: the latter as usual was delighted to meet Alvanly.

"Do you come from the 'enemy'?" Luttrell inquired of them.

"Yes," replied Fanny, laughing.

"My dear Fanny," said Luttrell, in his comical, earnest, methodistical manner, "my dear Fanny, this will never do!"

"What won't do?" inquired Fanny.

"These Russians, my dear."

"She has got a little Portuguese, besides the Russians, coming to her to-night," said I; "the Count Palmella."

"The ambassador?" Nugent asked.

"God bless my soul!" said Luttrell, looking up to the ceiling with such a face! Tom Sheridan would have liked to have copied it, when he played the methodist in a tub, at Mrs. Beaumont's masquerade.

"They are only all brought up upon trial," I observed; "she will cut the rest as soon as she has fixed on one of them."

"Yes; but you see, coming after these Cossacks is the devil!" lisped Alvanly, with his usual comical expression. "God bless your soul, we have no chance after these fellows."

"There is Argyle looking at you, from Lady W——'s box," Nugent said.

The remark put me out of humour, although I did observe that, though he sat in her ladyship's box, he was thinking most of me. Neverthless it was abominably provoking.

Lord Frederick Bentinck next paid me his usual visit.

"Everybody is talking about you," said his lordship. "Two men, downstairs, have been laying a bet that you are Lady Tavistock. Mrs. Orby Hunter says you are the handsomest woman in the house."

Poor Julia, all this time, did not receive the slightest compliment or attention from anybody. At last she kissed her hand to some one in a neighbouring box.

"Whom are you bowing to?" I inquired.

"An old flame of mine, who was violently in love with me when I was a girl at Hampton Court," whispered Julia. "I have never seen him since I knew Cotton."

"What is his name?" I asked.

"George Brummell," answered Julia.

I had never, at that time, heard of George Brummell.

"Do you know a Mr. George Brummell?" said I to Lord Alvanly.

Before his lordship could answer my question, Brummell entered the box; and, addressing himself to Julia, expressed his surprise, joy and astonishment at meeting with her.

Julia was now all smiles and sweetness. Just before Brummell's arrival she was growing a little sulky. Indeed she had reason, for in vain did we cry her up and puff her off, as Lord Carysfort's niece, or as an accomplished, elegant, charming creature, daughter of a maid of honour: she did not take. The men were so rude as often to suffer her to follow us by herself, without offering their arms to conduct her to the carriage. She was, in fact, so reserved, so shy, and so short-sighted, that, not being very young, nobody would be at the trouble of finding out what she was.

In the round room we held separate levées. Amy always fixed herself near enough to me to see what I was about, and try to charm away some of my admirers. Heaven knows Fanny and I had plenty to spare her, for they did so flock about us they scarcely left us breathing room. Argyle looked as if he wanted to join us, but was afraid of Lady W——.

"Are you not going home, pretty?" he would say to me, between his teeth, passing close to my ear.

"Do speak louder, marquis," I answered, provoked that he should be afraid of any woman but myself. "I am not going home these three hours. I am going first to Amy's party."

Lorne looked, not sulky, nor cross, as Fred Lamb would have done; but smiled beautifully, and said: "At three, then, may I go to you?"

"Yes," answered I, putting my hand into his, and again I contrived to forget Lady W——.

There was all the world at Amy's, and not half room enough for them. Some were in the passage

and some in the parlour, and in the drawing-room one could scarcely breathe. At the top of it, Amy sat coquetting with her tall Russians. The poor Count Palmella stood gazing on her at an humble distance.

The little delicate, weak, gentlemanlike Portuguese was no match for the three Cossacks. I do not believe he got in a single word the whole evening; but once, when Amy remarked that she should go the next evening to see the tragedy of *Omeo*.

"What tragedy is that, pray?" drawled out the Honourable John William Ward, starting from a fit of the dismals, just as if some one had gone behind him and, with a flapper, reminded him that he was at a party, and ought to *faire l'aimable aux dames*.

"You may laugh at me as much as you please," answered Amy, "and I must have patience and bear it, ight or ong; for I cannot pronounce the letter *r*."

"How very odd!" I remarked. "Why, you could pronounce it well enough at home!" I really did not mean this to tease her; for I thought, perhaps, lisping might grow upon us as we got older; but I soon guessed it was all sham, by the gathering storm on Amy's countenance. The struggle between the wish to show off effeminate softness to her lovers, and her ardent desire to knock me down, I could see by an arch glance at me, from Fanny's laughing eye and a shrug of her shoulder, was understood by that sister as well as by myself. Fanny's glance was the slyest thing in nature, and was given in perfect fear and trembling.

"Harriett's correctness may be, I am sorry to say," —and she paused to endeavour to twist her upper lip, trembling with fury, into the shape and form of what might be most pure and innocent in virtuous indignation!

Count Beckendorff eyed me with a look of pity and noble contempt, and then fixed his eyes with rapture on his angel's face!

Joking apart he was a monstrous fool, that same

Count Beckendorff, in the shape of a very handsome young Cossack.

"Where's the treaty of peace?" said Nugent, dreading a rupture, which should deaden half the spirit of the little pleasant suppers he wished to give us at his own rooms in the Albany. "No infringement, we beg, ladies. We have the treaty, under your pretty hands and seals."

"Peace be to France, if France, in peace, permit it!" said I, holding out my hand to Amy in burlesque majesty.

Amy could not, for the life of her, laugh with the rest; because she saw that they thought me pleasant. She, however, put out her hand hastily, to have done with what was bringing me into notice: and, that the subject might be entirely changed, and I as much forgotten, she must waltz that instant with Beckendorff.

"Sydenham!" said Amy, to one of her new admirers, who, being flute-mad and a beautiful flute-player was always ready.

"The flute does not mark the time enough for waltzing," said he, taking it out of a drawer; "but I shall be happy to accompany Harriette's waltz on the pianoforte, because she always plays in good time."

"Do not play, Harriette," said Amy; for fear it should strike any one that I played well; "if I had wished her to be troubled I should have asked her myself. The flute is quite enough;" and she began twirling her tall Cossack round the room. He appeared charmed to obey her commands and sport his really graceful waltzing.

"I do not think it a trouble, in the least," I observed, opening the instrument, without malice or vanity. I was never vain of music; and, at that early age, so much envy never entered my head. I hated playing too; but fancied that I was civil, in catching up the air and accompanying Colonel Sydenham.

"Harriette puts me out," said Amy, stopping, and she refused to stand up again, in spite of all Sydenham could say about my very excellent ear for music.

"*Madame a donc le projet d'aller à Drury-Lane, demain?*" said the Count Palmella at last, having been waiting, with his mouth open, ever since Amy mentioned *Omeo*, for an opportunity of following up the subject.

Amy darted her bright black eyes upon him, as though she had said, "*Ah! te voilà! d'où viens tu?*" but without answering him or perhaps understanding what he said.

"*Si madame me permettera*," continued the count, "*j'aurai l'honneur de lui engager une loge.*"

"*Oui s'il vous plait, je vous en serai obligé*," said Amy, though in somewhat worse French.

The celebrated beau, George Brummell, who had been presented to Amy by Julia in the round room at the opera, now entered and put poor Julia in high spirits. Brummell, as Julia always declared, was, when in the 10th Dragoons, a very handsome young man. However that might have been, nobody could have mistaken him for anything like handsome at the moment she presented him to us. Julia assured me that he had, by some accident, broken the bridge of his nose, and which said broken bridge had lost him a lady and her fortune of twenty thousand pounds. This, from the extreme flatness of it, his nose, I mean, not the fortune, appeared probable.

He was extremely fair, and the expression of his countenance far from disagreeable. His person too was rather good; nor could anybody find fault with the taste of all those who for years had made it a rule to copy the cut of Brummell's coat, the shape of his hat, or the tie of his neckcloth: for all this was in the very best possible style.

"No perfumes," Brummell used to say, "but very fine linen, plenty of it, and country washing."

"If John Bull turns round to look after you, you are not well dressed: but either too stiff, too tight, or too fashionable."

"Do not ride in ladies' gloves; particularly with leather breeches."

In short, his maxims on dress were excellent. Besides this, he was neither uneducated nor deficient. He possessed also a sort of quaint, dry humour, not amounting to anything like wit; indeed, he said nothing which would bear repetition; but his affected manners and little absurdities amused for the moment. Then it became the fashion to court Brummell's society, which was enough to make many seek it who cared not for it; and many more wished to be well with him through fear, for all knew him to be cold, heartless, and satirical.

It appeared plain and evident to me that his attention to Julia was no longer the effect of love. Piqued at the idea of having been refused marriage by a woman with whom Cotton had so easily succeeded, *sans cérémonie*, he determined in his own mind soon to be even with his late brother officer.

And pray, madam, the reader may ask; how came you to be thus early acquainted with George Brummell's inmost soul?

A mere guess. I will tell you why.

Brummell talked to Julia while he looked at me; and as soon as he could manage it with decency, he contrived to place himself by my side.

"What do you think of Colonel Cotton?" said he, when I mentioned Julia.

"A very fine dark man," I answered, "though not at all to my taste, for I never admire dark men."

"No man in England stinks like Cotton," said Brummell.

"Ah! ah!" thought I, "*me voilà au fait!*"

"A little Eau de Portugal would do no harm in that quarter, at all events," I remarked laughing, while alluding to his dislike of perfumery.

Amy gave us merely a tray-supper in one corner of the drawing-room, with plenty of champagne and claret. Brummell, in his zeal for cold chicken, soon appeared to forget everybody in the room. A loud discordant laugh from the Honourable John Ward, who was addressing something to Luttrell at the

other end of the table, led me to understand that he had just, in his own opinion, said a very good thing; yet I saw his corner of the room full of serious faces.

"Do you keep a valet, sir?" said I.

"I believe I have a rascal of that kind at home," said the learned, ugly scion of nobility, with disgusting affectation.

"Then," I retorted, "do, in God's name, bring him next Saturday to stand behind your chair."

"For what, I pray?"

"Merely to laugh at your jokes," I rejoined. "It is such hard work for you, sir, who have both to cut the jokes and to laugh at them too!"

"Do pray show him up, there's a dear creature, whenever you have an opportunity," whispered Brummell in my ear, with his mouth full of chicken.

"Is he not an odious little monster of ill-nature, take him altogether?" I asked.

"And look at that tie?" said Brummell, shrugging up his shoulders and fixing his eyes on Ward's neck-cloth.

Ward was so frightened at this commencement of hostilities from me, that he immediately began to pay his court to me, and engaged me to take a drive with him the next morning in his curricle.

"Go with him," whispered Brummell in my ear. "Keep on terms with him, on purpose to laugh at him." And then he turned round to Fanny, to ask her who her man of that morning was.

"You allude to the gentleman I was riding with in the park?" answered Fanny.

"I know who he is," said Alvanly. "Fanny is a very nice girl, and I wish she would not encourage such people. Upon my word it is quite shocking."

"Whom did you ride with to-day, Fanny?" I inquired.

"A d——n sugar baker," said Alvanly.

"I rode out to-day," replied Fanny, reddening, "with a very respectable man of large fortune."

"Oh yes!" said Alvanly, "there is a good deal of money to be got in the sugar line."

"Why do not you article yourself then to a baker of it," I observed, "and so pay some of your debts?"

This was followed by a laugh, which Alvanly joined in with great good humour.

"What is his name?" inquired Luttrell.

"Mr. John Mitchel," answered Fanny. "He received his education at a public school, with Lord Alvanly."

"I do not recollect Mitchel," retorted Alvanly; "but I believe there were a good many grocers admitted at that time."

Fanny liked Lord Alvanly of all things, and knew very little of Mr. Mitchel, except that he professed to be her very ardent admirer; yet her defence of the absent was ever made with all the warmth and energy her shyness would permit.

"Now, gentlemen," said Fanny, "have the goodness to listen to the facts as they really are."

Everybody was silent; for everybody delighted to hear Fanny talk.

"That little fat gentleman there," looking at Lord Alvanly, "whom you all suppose a mere idle, lazy man of genius, I am told studies *bon mots* all night in his bed." (A laugh.) "Further, I have been led to understand, that being much lower down in the class than Mitchel, though of the same age, his lordship in the year eighteen hundred and something or other was chosen, raised, and selected, for his civil behaviour, to the situation of prime and first fag to Mr. Mitchel, in which said department, his lordship distinguished himself much, by the very high polish he put upon Mr. J. Mitchel's boots and shoes."

There was not a word of truth in this story, the mere creation of Fanny's brain; yet still there was a probability about it, as they had been at school together, and which, added to Fanny's very pleasing, odd mode of expression, set the whole room in a roar of laughter. Alvanly was just as much amused as

the rest; for Fanny's humour had no real severity in it at any time.

"But, Fanny, you will make a point of cutting this grocer, I hope?" observed Brummell, as soon as the laugh had a little subsided.

"Do pray, Fanny," said I, "cut your Mitchels. I vote for cutting all the grocers and valets who intrude themselves into good society."

"My father was a very superior valet," Brummell quickly observed, "and kept his place all his life, and that is more than Palmerston will do," he continued, observing Lord Palmerston, who was in the act of making his bow to Amy, having just looked in on her from Lady Castlereagh's.

"I don't want any of Lady Castlereagh's men," said Amy. "Let all those who prefer her Saturday-night to mine, stay with her."

"Who on earth," said Luttrell, with his usual earnestness—"who on earth would think of Lady Castlereagh when they might be here?"

"Why Brummell went there for an hour before he came here," said Alvanly.

"Mr. Brummell had better go and pass a second hour with her ladyship," retorted Amy, "for we are really too full here."

"I am going for one," I said, putting on my shawl; for I began to think it would not do to neglect Argyle altogether. I made use of one of the Russian's carriages, to which Brummell handed me.

"To Argyle House, I suppose?" said Brummell, and then whispered in my ear, "You will be Duchess of Argyle, Harriette."

I found Argyle at his door, with his key, a little impatient. I asked him why he did not go to Amy's.

"I don't know your sister," answered his grace, "and I dislike what I have seen of her. She makes so many advances to me!"

I defended my sister as warmly as though she had really treated me with kindness, and felt at that time seriously angry with the duke for abusing her.

The next morning from my window I saw Amy drive up to my door, in the Count Palmella's barouche. "She wants me to write a copy of a letter for some of her men," thought I, well knowing that affection never brought Amy to visit me.

"Are you alone?" asked Amy, bouncing into the room.

"Yes," said I.

"Then tell that count, downstairs, he may go home," addressing my servant.

"Poor little man!" I remarked, "how terribly rude! I could not be rude to such a very timid, gentlemanly man as that!"

"Oh, he makes me sick," said Amy, "and I am come to consult you as to what I had better do. I like liberty best. If I put myself under the protection of anybody, I shall not be allowed to give parties and sit up all night; but then I have my desk full of long bills, without receipts!"

"I thought you were to marry Beckendorff and go to Russia," I observed.

"Oh true, I have come to tell you about Beckendorff. He is off for Russia this morning, to try to obtain the consent of the Emperor and that of his his own family. There was no harm in sending him there you know; for I can easily change my mind when he comes back, if anything which I like better occurs. He wished George to be his aide-de-camp; but George would not go."

"Is not Beckendorff a general in the service of the Emperor?" I asked.

"Yes, yes! but never mind Beckendorff," answered Amy impatiently. "I want two hundred pounds directly. It spoils all one's independence and one's consequence, to ask Englishmen for money. Palmella wishes to have me altogether under his protection. He is rich; but—but I like Colonel Sydenham best."

"Sydenham has no money," said I. "Palmella seems disposed to do a great deal for you and he is

very gentlemanlike; therefore, if a man you must have, my voice is for Palmella!"

"Well," said Amy, "I cannot stop! I do not much care. Palmella makes me sick too. It cannot be helped. You write me a copy directly, to say I consent to enter into the arrangement, as he calls it, which he proposed; namely, two hundred pounds a month paid in advance, and the use of his horses and carriage." This letter was soon despatched to his Excellency Palmella; and Amy shortly afterwards took her leave.

The next day as I was returning home from my solitary walk, reflections, the most despondingly melancholy, crowded on my mind. I thought of the youth I was passing away in passions wild and ungovernable, and, though ever ready to sacrifice more than life for those I have loved, with real genuine warmth and tenderness of heart, yet I had perhaps deserved that none should hereafter remember me with affection; for my actions had been regulated by the impulse and feelings of that heart alone, void of any other principle than what it had dictated, I was roused by a sudden tap on the shoulder from the coarse, red, ungloved hand of my old friend, Lord Frederick Bentinck.

"My lord, I was just going to drown myself, therefore pray do not leave me here alone."

"I must," said his lordship, panting, "for I have a great deal to do. I ought to be at the Horse Guards at this moment,"

"Nonsense! But if you really can do anything, I wish to heaven you would put on a pair of gloves."

"I only wish," answered his lordship, speaking loud, in a good-natured passion, "I only wish that you were compelled to listen to the sort of things I am obliged to attend to daily. Everybody wants promotion. No man will be satisfied with an answer. For my part, I have got into a way of writing my letters as soon as I have stated all that is to be said. I hate talking, many people expose themselves in that way, so, adio!"

It occurred to me as soon as his lordship had left me how unfortunate for his taciturn disposition was the meeting of Sir Murray Maxwell's friends, which took place some time ago, to commemorate that highly respected gentleman's broken pate. The noble lord was chosen steward of the feast and, whatever might be the exposure, either in the way or lack of intellect, Lord Frederick must inevitably come forward with a maiden-speech. The said discourse however would, no doubt, have redounded to the credit and glory of his lordship's able attorney, in spite of the many restrictions he had received not to put in any break-teeth long words; but, alas! his lordship was not aware of the defect of a memory which had never been so exerted, and, at the very critical moment, after he had risen to address the attentive assembly, he discovered with dismay that he had forgotten every word of his speech. What was to be done? He resolved to address them in detached sentences, delivered in a voice of thunder; such as," my principles, gentlemen—likewise—observe —my friends—but I therefore—being, as I say—a man of few words, gentlemen." The intervals being filled up with much gesticulation, everybody advanced their heads and redoubled their attention, to try to hear what could not be heard. Those who were at a distance said " we are too far off," and those immediately next to him thought themselves too near, or suspected the wine had taken an unusual effect, owing to the heated atmosphere of the crowded apartment. All resolved to secure better situations on the next meeting, that they might profit by so fine and affecting a discourse.

The season for Argyle's departure from London for the North was now drawing very near. He often spoke of it with regret, and sometimes he talked about my accompanying him.

"Not I, indeed!" was my answer; for I was an unsettled sort of being; and nothing but the whole heart of the man I loved could settle me.

Lorne had fascinated me and was the first man for whom I had felt the least passion; but his age made him fitter to be my father than my friend and companion: and then this Lady W——! How could I fix my affections on a man whom I knew to be attached still to another woman! Indeed, even his inconstancy to Lady W—— often disgusted me.

"You will not accompany me to Scotland then?" said the duke.

"No!"

"*Cela, donc, est décidé.*"

"*Oui.*"

I was getting into debt, as well as my sister Amy, when it so came to pass, as I have since heard say, that the—immortal!

No; that's common; a very outlandish distinction, fitter for a lady in a balloon.

The terrific! that will do better. I have seen his grace in his cotton nightcap. Well then; the terrific Duke of Wellington! the wonder of the world! Having six feet from the tail to the head, and—but there is a certain technicality in the expressions of the gentleman at Exeter Change, when he has occasion to show off a wild beast, which it would be vanity in me to presume to imitate; so leaving out his dimensions, &c. &c., it was even the Duke of Wellington, whose laurels, like those of the giant in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, had been hardly earned by the sweat of his little dwarf's brows, and the loss of their little legs, arms and eyes; who, feeling himself amorously given—it was in summer—one sultry evening, ordered his coachman to set him down at the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly, whence he sallied forth on foot to No. 2 or 3 in Berkeley Street, and rapped hastily at the door, which was immediately opened by the tawdry, well-rouged housekeeper of Mrs. Porter, who, with a significant nod of recognition, led him into her mistress's boudoir and then hurried away, simpering, to acquaint the good Mrs. Porter with the arrival of one of her oldest customers.

Mrs. Porter, on entering her boudoir, bowed low; but she had bowed lower still to his grace, who had paid but shabbily for the last *bonne fortune* she had contrived to procure him.

"Is it not charming weather?" said Mrs. Porter, by way of managing business with something like decency.

"There is a beautiful girl just come out," said his grace, without answering her question; "a very fine creature; they call her Harriette, and——"

"My lord," exclaimed Mrs. Porter, interrupting him; "I have had three applications this very month for the girl they call Harriette, and I have already introduced myself to her."

This was a fact, which happened while I was in Somers-town, and which I have forgotten to relate.

"It was," continued Mrs. Porter, "at the very earnest request of General Walpole. She is the wildest creature I ever saw. She did not affect modesty, nor appear in the least offended at my intrusion. Her first question was 'Is your man handsome?' I answered, frankly, that the general was more than sixty years of age; at which account she laughed heartily; and then, seeming to recollect herself, she said she really was over head and ears in debt; and therefore must muster up courage to receive one visit from her antiquated admirer at my house.

"Well?" interrupted Wellington, half jealous, half disgusted.

"Well, my lord," continued Mrs. Porter, "the appointment was made for eight o'clock on the following evening, at which hour the old general was punctual and fidgeted about the room over this, my lord, for more than three-quarters of an hour. At last he rung the bell violently. I answered it; and he told me in a fury he would not thus be trifled with. I was beginning very earnest protestations when we heard a loud rap at the street door, and immediately afterwards my housekeeper entered, to inform me that a lady whose face was covered with

a thick black veil, had just arrived in a hackney-coach, and she had shown her into the best room.

"She came then?" inquired Wellington, impatiently, and blowing his nose.

"You shall hear, my lord," continued Mrs. Porter. "The old general, in a state of perfect ecstasy, took me by the hand, and begged me to pardon his testy humour, assuring me that he had been for more than a year following Harriette, and therefore that this disappointment had been too much for his stock of patience.

"I led the way to the room, where we expected to find Harriette. The black veil did not surprise us. She was too young to be expected to enter my house void of shame. Judge our astonishment, my lord, when the *incognita*, throwing back her veil with much affectation, discovered a wrinkled face, which had weathered at least sixty summers, aye and winters, too!"

"'The Lord defend me!' said I.

"'Who the devil are you?' said the general.

"'A charming creature," replied the hag, 'if you did but know me. A widow, too, dear general, very much at your disposal; for my dear good man has been dead these thirty years.'

"'You are a set of ——'

"The general was interrupted by his fair *incognita*, with—'Here is gallantry! here is treatment of the soft sex! No, Mr. General, not the worst of your insinuations shall ever make me think the less of myself!'

"The general, at this moment, beginning to feel a little ashamed, and completely furious, contrived to gain the street, declaring that he would never enter my vile house again. His fair one insisted on following him; and all I could say or do would not prevent her. I know not what became of them both."

"My good woman," said Wellington, without making any remarks on her story, "my time is precious. One hundred guineas are yours, and as

much Harriette's, if you can induce her to give me the meeting."

"My dear lord," said Mrs. Porter, quite subdued, "what would I not do to serve you! I will pay Harriette a visit early to-morrow morning; although my lord, to tell you the truth, I was never half so afraid of any woman in my life. She is so wild, and appears so perfectly independent, and so careless of her own interests and welfare, that I really do not know what is likely to move her."

"Nonsense!" said Wellington, "it is very well known that the Marquis of Lorne is her lover."

"Lord Lorne may have gained Harriette's heart," said Mrs. Porter, just as if she understood the game of hearts! "However," added she, "I will not give up the business till I have had an interview with Harriette."

"And make haste about it," said Wellington taking up his hat, "I shall call for your answer in two days. In the meantime, if you have anything like good news to communicate, address a line to Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley-square."

These two respectable friends now took leave of each other, as we will of the subject, *pour le moment, au moins.*

I rather think it must have been on the very day the above scene took place that Fanny, Julia, and myself dined together at my house, and Amy unasked joined us after dinner; because she had nothing better to do.

"You are welcome," said I to Amy, "so that you bring me no men; but men I will not admit."

"Why not?" Amy inquired.

"Why? because I am not a coquette like you, and it fatigues me to death to be eternally making the agreeable to a set of men who might be all buried and nobody would miss them. Besides, I have seen such a man!"

"What manner of man have you seen?" asked Fanny.

"A very god!" retorted I.

"Who is he?" inquired Amy.

"I do not know," was my answer.

"What is his name?"

"I cannot tell."

"Where did you see him?"

"In Sloane Street, riding on horseback, and followed by a large dog."

"What a simpleton you are," observed Amy.

"I never made myself so ridiculous about any man yet," I observed, "as you have done about that frightful, pale, William Ponsonby."

"Oh, he is indeed a most adorable heavenly creature," rejoined Amy, turning up her eyes in a fit of heroics.

"Good gracious! how can people be so blind," exclaimed I. "Why he has not a single point of beauty about him."

"And what," I continued, "have you done with Palmella?"

"Oh!" replied Amy, in some little confusion, "I have never seen him since."

"Did you send the letter I wrote for you?"

"Yes," answered Amy.

"And did he send you the two hundred pounds?"

"Directly," rejoined Amy, "with a letter full of professions of the deepest gratitude."

"And where is that poor dear little man now?" inquired I.

"God knows!" replied Amy. "I have been denied to him ever since. Sydenham has been telling me that I am too beautiful, and it would really be too great a sacrifice for me to throw myself away on Palmella."

"Did Sydenham say your returning the two hundred pounds would be too great a sacrifice also?"

"No! but I have spent it."

It was now growing late, and we separated.

CHAPTER IV

THE next morning my servant informed me that a lady desired to speak a word to me. Her name was Porter.

"You are come to scold me for sending my old nurse to console the general?" said I, when I entered the room where she was waiting.

"Not at all, my dear, wild young lady," answered Mrs. Porter; "but I am now come to inform you that you have made the conquest of a very fine, noble, unexceptionable man."

"Delightful," said I. "Who is he?"

"I dare not tell you his name," interrupted Mrs. Porter, "but you may rest assured that he is a man of fashion and rank."

"It will not do!" reiterated I, striking my head. "Tell your friend that I have no money, that I do not know how to take care of myself, and Argyle takes no care of me. Tell him that nobody wants a real steady friend more than I do; but I cannot meet a stranger as a lover. Tell him all this, if he is really handsome that is to say (for the stranger I had twice met riding down Sloane Street, accompanied by his large dog, had lately run often in my head), and let me know what he says to-morrow."

Mrs. Porter acquiesced, and hearing a loud rap at my door, she hastily took her leave.

This was Fanny. At his own earnest request, she had brought me the son of the rich Freeling, secretary to the General Post Office; saying, "Mr. Freeling will allow me no rest, till I have made him known to you."

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE

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The young man was civil and humble, and kept a proper distance; and was rather a bore. In point of fact, at least in my humble opinion, there is no endurable medium between men of the very highest fashion and honest tradesmen, to those who have once acquired a taste and habit of living with any high-bred people. Young Freeling was a gentleman, as far as grammar and eating with his fork went; and Fanny proposed our going to Covent Garden together that evening. She wanted to show little Fanny, for by that appellation we distinguished her eldest daughter, the Harlequin farce, before she returned to school.

"What is the play?" said I.

"*Julius Cæsar*," answered Freeling.

I was pleased beyond measure at the idea of seeing this play.

I had been at but three plays in my life, all comedies. I shall never forget the delight I experienced in witnessing that fine scene between Brutus and Cassius where they quarrel, performed by John Kemble and Charles Young! Were I to live to the age of a hundred I should not forget John Kemble's energetic delivery of those beautiful lines, so finely expressive of virtuous indignation, so rich in eloquence, in force and in nerve. In short I, like Mark Antony, being no scholar, can only speak right on, and know not how to praise the poet as he merits. Yet few perhaps among the most learned have, in their hearts, done more honour to some of the natural beauties of Shakespeare than I have. I just now alluded to this passage,

> What, shall one of us,
> That struck the foremost man of all this world
> But for supporting robbers; shall we now,
> Contaminate our fingers with base bribes?
> And sell the mighty share of our large honours,
> For so much trash, as may be grasped thus?

Neither was Young's excellent performance of

Cassius lost upon me. The feeling manner in which he expressed these lines brought more tears into my eyes than any love scene, however pathetic, could have done:

> I that denied thee gold, will give my heart:
> Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar; for, I know,
> When thou didst hate him worst, thou lov'dst him better
> Than ever thou lov'dst Cassius.

I am not sitting down here to write a book of quotations; but I could not help offering my mite of praise to the memory of that great actor whose likeness I shall never behold again on earth: and such was the impression Kemble made on me, that methinks I hear his accent in my ear, and the very tone of that voice, which made my heart thrill so long ago, while he was thus taking leave of Cassius:

> And whether we shall meet again I know not;
> Therefore our everlasting farewell take.
> For ever, and for ever, farewell Cassius!
> If we do meet again, why we shall smile;
> If not, why then this parting was well made.

I begged to be excused remaining to see the Harlequin farce, as it would have been impossible for me to have witnessed such an exhibition after *Julius Cæsar*, and I was allowed to drive home alone, for I insisted on not robbing Fanny of the protection of our worthy general postman.

The next morning I received another visit from Mrs. Porter, who informed me that she had just had an interview with my new lover and had reported to him all I had desired her to say.

"Since you object to meet a stranger," continued Mrs. Porter, "his grace desires me to say, he hopes you can keep a secret, and to inform you, that it is the Duke of Wellington who so anxiously desires to make your acquaintance."

"I have heard of his grace often," said I, in a tone of deep disappointment: for I had been indulging a

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kind of hope about the stranger with the great Newfoundland dog, with whose appearance I had been so unusually struck as to have sought for him every day, and I thought of him every hour.

"His grace," Mrs. Porter proceeded, "only entreats to be allowed to make your acquaintance. His situation, you know, prevents the possibility of his getting regularly introduced to you."

"It will never do," said I, shaking my head.

"Be assured," said Mrs. Porter, "he is a remarkably fine-looking man, and, if you are afraid of my house, promise to receive him in your own, at any hour when he may be certain to find you alone."

"Well," thought I, with a sigh; "I suppose he must come. I do not understand economy, and am frightened to death at debts. Argyle is going to Scotland, and I shall want a steady sort of friend of some kind, in case a bailiff should get hold of me.'

"What shall I say to his grace?" Mrs. Por'ter inquired, growing impatient.

"Well, then," said I, "since it must be so, tell his grace that I will receive him to-morrow at three; but mind, only as a common acquaintance!"

Away winged Wellington's Mercury, as an old woman wings it at sixty, and most punctual to my appointment, at three on the following day, Wellington made his appearance. He bowed first, then said:

"How do you do?" Then thanked me for having given him permission to call on me; and then wanted to take hold of my hand.

"Really," said I, withdrawing my hand, "for such a renowned hero, you have very little to say for yourself."

"Beautiful creature!" uttered Wellington, "where is Lorne?"

"Good gracious!" said I, out of all patience at his stupidity; "what come you here for, duke?"

"Beautiful eye, yours!" explained Wellington.

"Aye man! they are greater conquerors than ever

Wellington shall be; but, to be serious, I understood you came here to try to make yourself agreeable?"

"What child! do you think that I have nothing better to do than to make speeches to please ladies?" said Wellington.

"*Après avoir dépeuplé la terre vous devez faire tout pour la repeupler*," I replied.

"You should see me where I shine," Wellington observed, laughing.

"Where's that, in God's name?"

"In a field of battle," answered the hero.

"*Battez vous, donc, et qu'un autre me fasse la cour!*" said I.

But love scenes, or even love quarrels, seldom tend to amuse the reader, so, to be brief, what was a mere man, even though it were the handsome Duke of Argyle, to a Wellington!

Argyle grew jealous of Wellington's frequent visits, and hiding himself in his native woods wrote me the following very pathetic letter.

"I am not quite sure whether I do, or do not love you—I am afraid I did too much;—but, as long as you find pleasure in the society of another, and a hero too, I am well contented to be a mere common mortal, a monkey, or what you will. I too have my heroines waiting for me in all the woods about here. Here are the wood-cutter's daughter and the gardener's maid always waiting for my gracious presence, and to which of them I shall throw the handkerchief I know not. How then can I remain constant to your inconstant charms? I could have been a little romantic about you it is true; but I always take people as I find them, *et j'ai ici beau jeu.* Adieu.

"I am very fond of you still, for all this.

"ARGYLE."

This was my answer:

"Indeed as you are as yet the only man who has ever had the least influence over me, therefore I

George, 6th Duke of Argyll.

entreat you do not forget me! I wish I were the woodcutter's daughter awaiting your gracious presence, in the woods for days! weeks! months! so that at last you would reward me with the benevolent smile of peace and forgiveness, or that illumined, beautiful expression of more ardent feeling such as I have often inspired and shall remember for ever, come what may; and whether your fancy changes or mine. You say you take people as you find them; therefore you must and you shall love me still, with all my imperfections on my foolish head, and that, dearly.

"HARRIETTE."

Wellington was now my constant visitor—a most unentertaining one, Heaven knows! and, in the evenings, when he wore his broad red ribbon, he looked very like a rat-catcher.

"Do you know," said I to him one day, "do you know the world talk about hanging you?"

"Eh?" said Wellington.

"They say you will be hanged, in spite of all your brother Wellesley can say in your defence."

"Ha!" said Wellington, very seriously, "what paper do you read?"

"It is the common talk of the day," I replied.

"They must not work me in such another campaign," Wellington said, smiling, "or my weight will never hang me."

"Why you look a little like the apothecary in Romeo already," I said.

In my walks Brummell often joined me, and I now walked oftener than usual: indeed whenever I could make anybody walk with me; because I wanted to meet the man with his Newfoundland dog, who was not the sort of man either that generally strikes the fancy of a very young female; for he was neither young nor at all gaily drest. No doubt he was very handsome; but it was that pale expressive beauty, which oftener steals upon us by degrees, after

having become acquainted, than strikes us at first sight.

I had of late frequently met him, and he always turned his head back after he had passed me; but whether he admired, or had indeed observed me, or whether he only looked back after his large dog, was what puzzled and tormented me. "Better to have been merely observed by that fine noble-looking being, than adored by all the men on earth besides," thought I, being now at the very tip-top of my heroics.

Dean Swift mentions having seen, in the grand academy of Lagado, an ingenious architect, who had contrived a new method of building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation; and which he justified by the like practice of those two prudent insects the bee and the spider. The operation of my love then was after the model of this architect. The airy foundation on which I built my castles caused them ever to descend. Once in my life, when I raised my air-built fabric unusually high, it fell with such a dead weight on my heart, that the very vital spark of existence was nearly destroyed. I have never enjoyed one hour's health since. Now, however, I look on all my past bitter suffering, caused by this same love, which many treat as a plaything and a child, and which I believe to be one of the most arbitrary, ungovernable passions in nature, as a wild dream, remembered by me merely as I recollect three days of delirium, by which I was afflicted after the scarlet fever, with the idea of rats and mice running over my head, and which thus kept me in a frenzy, from the mere working of a disordered brain.

Characters and feelings, unnaturally stretched on the sentimental bed of torture, must return with violence to their natural tone and dimensions, says a celebrated French writer. The idol of romantic passion, in some unlucky moment of common sense or common life, is discovered to be the last thing

their worshippers would wish the idol to be found—a mere human being! with passions, and infirmities, and wants, utterly unprovided for by the statutes of romance. Soon, we find too, a certain falling off in our own powers of human life, a subjection to common accidents, to ill health, and to indigence, which sicklies o'er the rich colouring of passion with the pale cast of humanity.

But to proceed—if, in my frequent walks about Sloane Street and Hyde Park, I failed to meet the stranger, whose whole appearance had so affected my imagination, I was sure to see George Brummell, whose foolish professions of love I could not repeat, for I scarcely heard them. One day, just as I was going to sit down to dinner with Fanny and Amy, who was passing the evening with her, I felt a kind of presentiment come over me, that, if I went into Hyde Park at that moment, I should meet this stranger. It was past six o'clock. I had never seen him but at that hour. They both declared that I was mad, and Lord Alvanly calling on Fanny at that moment, they retailed my folly to his lordship.

"I dare say he is some dog-fancier, or whipper-in, or something of the sort," said Alvanly. "God bless my soul! I thought you had more sense. What does Argyle say to all this?"

Lord Lowther now entered the room.

"How very rude you all are," said Fanny. "I have told you frequently that this is my dinner-hour, and you never attend to it!"

"It is those d—mn grocers, the Mitchels," said Alvanly, "who have taught you to dine at these hours! Who the d—l dines at six? why I am only just out of bed!"

Lord Lowther made many civil apologies. He wanted to have the pleasure of engaging us three to dine with him on the following day, to meet the Marquis of Hertford, then Lord Yarmouth; a Mr. Graham, the son of Sir James Graham, Bart.; Street,

the editor of the *Courier* newspaper; and J. W. Croker, M.P. of the Admiralty.

We accepted the invitation, and Lord Lowther, after begging us not to be later than half-past seven, took his leave.

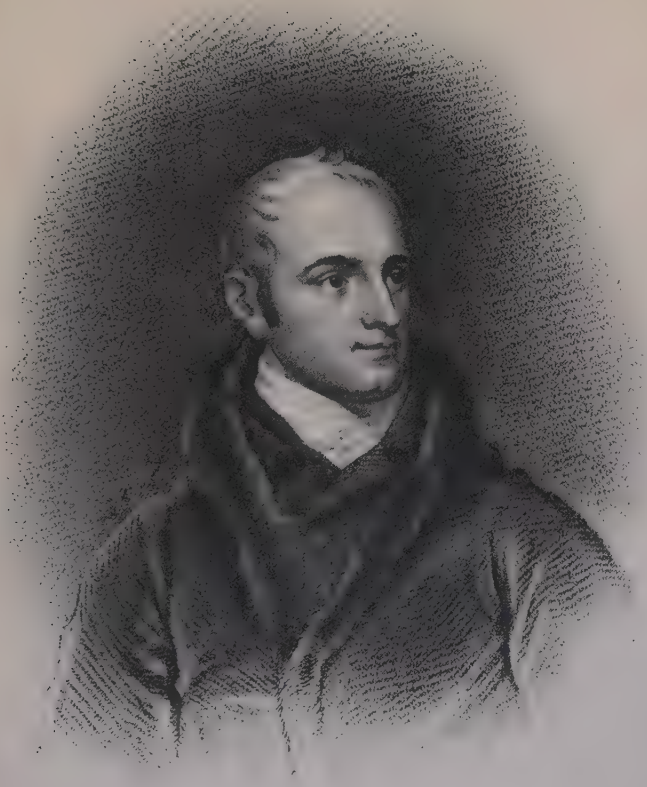
Alvanly accompanied me as far as Hyde Park, laughing at me and my man and his dog all the way. The park was now entirely empty—nothing like a hero, nor even a dog to be seen.

"I must now wish you good morning," said Alvanly. "I am not going to be groom," he added in my ear.

I shook hands with him, without at all understanding what he meant, and walked down towards that side of the river where I had once or twice seen the stranger coaxing his dog to swim by throwing stones into the water.

If I could but once see him walking with any man I had ever met before, then at least I should have a chance of learning his name. I continued to wander up and down the river for nearly an hour. As I was returning home disappointed as usual, I met an elderly gentleman, whose name I forget, though we had often seen each other in society. He stopped to converse with me on common subjects for a few minutes and, just as he had taken his leave, and was slowly walking his horse away, a very clean, aged woman came up to me and begged assistance. Her manners were unlike these of a common beggar. She smiled on me, and looked as if she would have been nearly as much pleased by a few kind words as with money.

I always liked very old people when they were clean and appeared respectable, and I was unusually interested by this woman's demeanour. I eagerly searched my reticule. Alas! it was empty. I turned a wistful eye towards the old gentleman who had left me. His prim seat on horseback struck me altogether as too formidable. "If I knew him a little better," thought I, hesitating, as I saw him stop to



JOHN WILSON CROKER

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speak to his groom. He turned his harsh-looking countenance at that moment towards me. "It will never do," thought I, and then I expressed my sincere regret to the poor old woman that I had nothing to give her.

"Never mind," replied the good old creature, smiling very kindly on me, "never mind, my dear young lady. Many, I bless God, are more in want than I am."

"Wait here a minute," said I.

My desire to assist her now overcoming my repugnance, I ran as fast as I possibly could after the old gentleman, who was disappearing, and quite out of breath, and in the deepest confusion told him I had forgotten my purse, and had occasion for half a crown, which I hoped he would lend me.

"Certainly, with pleasure," said the old gentleman, drawing out his purse and presenting me with what I had asked for.

I made him many confused apologies; and turning hastily towards some trees, which led by rather a shorter road to where I had left the old woman, I came immediately in close contact with the stranger, whose person had been concealed by two large elms and who might have been observing me for some time. I scarcely dared encourage the flattering idea. It made me wild; and yet, why should such a noble, fashionable-looking man have pulled up his horse, between two trees, where there was nothing else to be seen?

After all, I was only encouraging the most absurd vanity, contrary to common sense. Might he not be watching his dog? Did he ever look at me? I know not! After passing days and days in looking for him, his sudden appearance caused such a tremulousness to come over me that I wanted courage, once, to raise my eyes to his face; so that I rather felt than knew I was near him, whom now I passed as quickly as my extreme agitation would permit, and soon came up with the old woman, and presenting the

half-crown and my card desired her to call and see me.

The poor old nervous creature shed tears of gratitude, called me a dear, sweet young lady, assured me that she had kept a respectable inn for thirty years at Glasgow, which from her language I was inclined to believe, and then took her leave.

I now ventured to turn my head back, believing myself at a safe distance from the stranger. He had quitted his hiding-place, and was slowly walking his very fine horse towards me. "There he is," thought I. "No one is near us, and yet, in another minute or two he will have passed me, and be perhaps lost to me for ever." I began to muster all the energies of my character, generally fertile in resources, to consider of a remedy for this coming evil. "If any man could be bribed to follow him slyly!" thought I, hastily looking about me. The stranger drew nearer. Alas! he will have passed me for ever perhaps in another instant. Surely I might have said, with King Richard,

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

since, without one, who could follow the stranger? I heard the sound of his horse's feet close behind me. "I will fix my eyes upon his face this time, to ascertain if he looks at me," said I to myself with a sudden effort of desperate resolution; which I put in practice the next moment. I thought our eyes met, and that the stranger blushed; but his were so immediately withdrawn from my face, that I went home, still in doubt whether he had or had not taken sufficient notice of me even to know me again by sight.

I related this adventure to Fanny on my return. She gave me some dinner, and advised me, with friendly seriousness, not to make such a fool of myself about a man I had never spoken to, and who after all might turn out to be vulgar, or ill-mannered, or of bad character.

"True," answered I, "and I shall be glad to learn

that this man is either of those, for vulgarity will make me heart-whole again in an instant. In short, at any rate, I look for my cure in a future knowledge of this man's character. Nothing is perfect under the sun; and rank, talents, wit, beauty, character, manners, all must combine in that human being who shall ever make me die of a broken heart. Therefore I am safe."

"I had not an idea that you were such a simpleton, or half so sentimental," retorted Fanny. "I wonder if I should admire the man!"

"We will try and meet him together," I replied; "but enough of a subject which begins to make me melancholy—as though he were my fate! How many fine, elegant-looking young men have I not met about the streets and at the opera, without their making the slightest impression on me. And what do I know of this man beyond mere beauty of countenance! yet I think, if I could but touch with my hand the horse he rode, or the dog he seems so fond of, I should be half wild with joy."

"What incredible nonsense, my dear Harriette," said Fanny.

"But true, upon my word," I replied, "and I cannot help myself."

Fanny shook her head at me, and I left her, to dream of the stranger.

CHAPTER V

By a little before eight on the following evening, the party I have before mentioned all sat down to dinner at Lord Lowther's in Pall Mall. Lord Yarmouth was at the bottom of the table, opposite to Lord Lowther; Amy, on Lowther's right hand, Fanny at his left; Street, the editor, was her neighbour; and I sat next to Croker. Poor Julia had not been invited. Lord Hertford, who at his own table is always particularly entertaining, was a little out of sorts here, which generally happened to him when he dined with Lowther, who gave a very bad dinner.

Lord Hertford very candidly owns that he dislikes a bad dinner; and I had heard him own it so often to Lord Lowther, that I was surprised his lordship invited him at all, unless he had thought proper to have provided a good one.

The claret, Lowther said, he wanted Lord Hertford's opinion about, having just provided himself with a large quantity of it, in consequence of its quality having been strongly recommended to him.

Our first glass had scarcely gone round, when Lord Hertford said, in his uusal, loud, odd voice, addressing Lowther, "You asked me for my opinion, and I will give it you; your claret is not worth a d—n."

Poor Lowther looked a little annoyed.

Croker fought on his side. "I must differ in opinion with you, Lord Hertford," said he, in his starched pragmatical manner: "I think the claret excellent."

"With all my heart," said Hertford, in a tone and manner of the most perfect indifference.

"How is your poetical doctor?" Lowther asked me; alluding to my physician, Doctor Nevinson, who, during a serious illness in which he had attended me, had been kind enough to sing my praise in his best rhymes.

I was very earnest in my commendations of that gentleman, believing myself under some obligations to him.

"These doctors are lucky fellows," Croker observed, affectedly.

"Not always," said I. "I have here a few lines, poor old Eliot of the Audit Office made at my house this morning, on Dr. Nevinson's hard case;" and I put into his hand a small bit of paper which was in my reticule.

"What flirtation is going on there, pray, between you two?" inquired Street, who observed me.

"Nothing," I replied, "but a few bad rhymes about Dr. Nevinson."

"Read! read!" exclaimed they all.

Between Lord Lowther's scanty courses there was ever room for reflection, even to madness.

Mr. Secretary Croker read, as follows:

THE PHYSICIAN'S PRAYER TO ÆOLUS.

God of the winds, oh! grant my prayer,
And end this solemn frolic;
Or, when I next attend the fair,
Defend them from the cholic.

But if thy brother of the bow
To physic bind me fast,
Grant that the old from me may go,
For cure, to Dr. Last!

Release me from the dry concern
Of listening to their moaning,
And from your votary ever turn
Old dames with cholic groaning!

For patients, oh, to me impart
The gay, the young, the witty;
Such as may interest the heart.
This prayer, oh grant, in pity!

"Allow me to look at them," said Street, as soon as Croker had finished reading.

"I think Eliot clever," said Hertford. "What has become of him?"

"Oh," replied Amy, "I believe he is going to die he has grown so very dull and heavy. Do you know, I told him a very interesting story one day last week, and he did not at all listen to it; and before I had finished repeating it a second time he fell fast asleep."

"Poor fellow!" said Street: he could not stand the second edition.

Mr. Graham sat on my left hand, and was as attentive to me as possible. Graham was a beauty; a very Apollo in form, with handsome features, particularly his teeth and eyes; sensible too, and well educated.

"I brought you two together, because I knew you would fall in love with each other," said Lowther.

"How impossible," thought I, as the stranger in Hyde Park, as I last saw him, or fancied I saw him blush, crossed my mind. I was not disposed to admire anything else, indeed; but I rather think Graham was pedantic.

He spoke to me a good deal of Fred Lamb, with whom he had been travelling on the Continent.

"Fred Lamb has often been jealous of me," said Graham; "but he would be jealous of any man; yet I have always liked Fred much better than ever he liked me."

"His passion for women is so very violent," I observed, "that somehow or other, it disgusted me."

"All ladies are not so refined," replied Graham, laughing.

"Perhaps not," answered I; "perhaps I may not be so refined when I like my man better."

Street was all this time making hard love to Fanny. Poor Street though a very pleasant man, is, as he knows, a very ugly one. Fanny's extreme good nature was always a Refuge for the Destitute. If ever there was a lame, a deaf, a blind, or an ugly man, in our society, Fanny invariably made up to that man immediately, to put him in countenance. Nay, she would, I believe, have made up to the Duke of Devonshire, blind, deaf, absent and all, had he fallen in her way.

At this moment, my ear caught the word cruel, as applied to Fanny by Street.

"Quite the reverse, Fanny is all goodness," I exclaimed.

"Yes," rejoined Street, "as far as words go."

"It is you, Mr. Street, who cruelly neglect me, on the contrary," said Fanny, laughing.

"Never!" answered Street, laying his hand on his heart.

"Then why did you not call at the oilshop?" Fanny asked; alluding to the place where she had formerly been lodging for a short time in Park Street, and to which she had invited Street.

"Wounded pride!" observed Street.

"She would have poured oil into your wounds," said Lord Hertford.

"I'll thank you to pass me another bottle of this bad claret," squeaked out Croker; "for I must be candid enough to say that I like it much."

"I wont abuse it again," Lord Hertford observed, "for fear you should get drunk."

I now grew tired of waiting for Amy to make a first move, and began to think she was ill disposed in the humility of her heart to take upon her the privilege of eldest sister: so I made it for her and we retired to Lowther's drawing-room, from which we took a peep into his dressing-room, where we found a set of vile, dirty combs, brushes, towels, and dressing-gowns. Lowther, who always has a pain in his liver, and knows not how to take kindly to his bottle,

entered his apartment, just as we were loudest in our exclamations of horror and dismay, as these said dirty objects offered themselves to our view.

"For heaven's sake," said Amy, with whom Lowther was certainly in love, "do turn away your valet, and burn these nasty, dirty brushes and things."

"It will be no use, I believe," replied Lowther; "for every valet will copy his master."

"What! then," exclaimed Amy, "you admit the master is dirty?"

Lowther feared he must plead guilty.

"I am very glad I ran away from you," retorted Amy, who had gone with him into the country, and afterwards cut him because he did not ask for a separate dressing-room at the inns on the road.

The other gentlemen soon joined us in the drawing-room, drank their coffee, and then we were all off to the Opera.

I had the honour of taking Mr. Graham there in my carriage with Fanny. Amy went with Lord Lowther.

We found Julia in our private box, alone and half asleep, dressed very elegantly; and, in my opinion, looking very interesting and well.

"What, alone?" said I. "Why do you not make the men more civil?" and I introduced her to young Graham.

Julia had lately got nearly to the bottom of her heroics with Cotton. She was ashamed to admit the idea even to herself; she never would own it to me: but the fact was, she was tired of Cotton, and dying, and sighing, and longing secretly for something new. Young and beautiful, her passions, like those of a man, were violent and changeable; in addition to which she had lately suffered every possible indignity and inconvenience which debts and duns could inflict; besides, Fanny and I, who knew that Mr. Cotton had a wife and large family at home, had laboured with all our hearts to disgust Julia with Cotton, believing that it would be for the good of

both that they separated for ever. Cotton had not a shilling to spare for the support of Julia's children; and Julia's accouchements took place regularly once in eleven months. She had often vainly applied to her parents, as well as to her uncle, Lord Carysfoot, who only wrote to load her with reproaches.

As soon as Graham had left us, Julia expressed her admiration of him, in very warm terms.

"He has no money," said Fanny; "besides, I can see that he is making up to Harriette. Do, my dear Julia, consider all your beautiful children; and, if you can leave Cotton to his poor wife, and must form another connection, let it be with some one who can contribute to the support of your young family."

Julia assured us she was at that moment actually in expectation of being arrested; and she entreated that Fanny or I would make an application to some of her noble relations, which she promised to do.

This point being decided, she again talked of Graham's beauty, wondered where he was, and anxiously inquired whether I was sure that he had taken a fancy for me.

"Not a bit sure," I replied. "I know nothing at all of the matter, neither do I care."

Fanny then related all about my last meeting with my stranger and his dog to Julia, who seemed to understand my sensations much better than Fanny did.

"Oh, *mon Dieu*?" interrupted I, "there is in that box next to Lady Foley's, a man—no, it is still handsomer than my stranger! and yet" (the stranger turned his head towards our side of the house)—"Oh!" continued I, taking hold of Fanny's hand, in a fit of rapture, "it is he! only his hat, till now, concealed that beautiful head of hair."

"Where? where?" cried out they both at once.

"Oh! that some one would come into our box now and tell us who he is!" I exclaimed.

"How provoking you are," said Julia. "Why do not you point out the man to us?"

"It is that man, who is laughing.—Oh! I had no idea that his teeth were so very beautiful!"

"Dear me, how tiresome," observed Fanny, quietly. "If you will not tell us which is your man let us talk of something else."

"He is there," replied I, "next to Lady Foley's box, leaning on his arm."

Julia put her glass to her eye as usual; being remarkably short-sighted she could distinguish nothing without it.

"I know him," said Julia, after fixing him for some time.

"Not much?" I observed, almost breathless. "Did you ever speak to him?"

"I have met him in society, when I was a girl," continued Julia; "but I was intimate with a girl, to whom, when young, he proposed. Her wedding clothes were made; she used to sleep in my room, with his picture round her neck. She adored him beyond all that could be imagined of love and devotion, and within a few days of their proposed marriage he declared off. His excuse was that his father refused his consent."

"For many years," continued Julia, "my friend's sufferings were severe; her parents trembled for her reason. No one was permitted to name her former lover in her presence. She is now Lady Conyng ham."

"And his name?" said I.

"Lord Ponsonby, who is supposed to be the handsomest man in England: but he must now be forty, if not more," replied Julia.

"I wish he were sixty," I answered. "As it is, I have no chance: but indeed I never thought I had. He is a sort of man I think I could be wicked enough o say my prayers to. I could live in his happiness only without his knowing me. I could wait for hours near his house for the chance of seeing him pass or hearing his voice."

Fanny laughed outright.

Julia only exclaimed, "'Well done, Harriette! You are more romantic than ever I was at your age, and I thought that was impossible."

"You did not love Lord Ponsonby," retorted I.

"True," said Julia: "badinage apart, Ponsonby is, as I have always been told, very near perfection. But what chance can you have? He is married to the loveliest creature on earth—the youngest daughter of Lord Jersey."

"I knew very well," sighed I despondingly, "before I heard of his marriage, that I should never be anything to him."

"I will tell you where he lives," said Julia. "It is in Curzon Street, May Fair."

"Well then," thought I, "at least when he passes me, I shall not, as yesterday, fancy I am looking at him for the last time."

Upon the whole my spirits were violently elated this evening. Lord Ponsonby I believe did not perceive me. I was most anxious, yet afraid, to see his wife.

"I cannot find her box," observed Julia, "else I should know her immediately."

We now lost sight of his lordship for some time, he having left the box I first saw him in. I perceived him for an instant afterwards, but missed him altogether before the opera was over.

"I am glad I have not seen his wife," said I, "after we were seated in the carriage. I hope I shall never see her as long as I live."

I resolved now to make no kind of advances to become acquainted with Lord Ponsonby; but on the very next evening I indulged myself in passing his house at least fifty times. I saw and examined the countenances of his footmen and the colour of his window-curtains: even the knocker of his door escaped not my veneration, since Lord Ponsonby must have touched it so often. My very nature seemed now to have undergone a change. I began to dislike society, and considered the unfortunate situation I had fallen

into with horror; because I fancied Lord Ponsonby would despise me. I often reflected whether there might yet be some mighty virtue in my power, some sacrifice of self, some exertion of energy, by which I might, one day, deserve to be respected, or to have my memory respected by Lord Ponsonby after I was dead.

The fact is, I really now lived but in his sight, and I only met him once or twice in a week, to see him pass me without notice, At last I began to believe he really did see me in the park with pleasure, when by any accident late in the evening, I happened to be alone and the park empty. Once he rode behind me to my very door, and passed it, without seeming to look at me: the dread of being by him accused of boldness ever prevented my observation.

This day, on entering my house, I mounted hastily up into my garret, and got upon the leads, there to watch if Lord Ponsonby turned back, or whether he had merely followed me by accident on his way somewhere else. He rode on almost as far as I could see, and then turned back again, and galloped hastily by my door as though afraid of being observed by me.

"Suppose he were to love me!" thought I, and the idea caused my heart to beat wildly I would not dwell upon it. It was ridiculous. It would only expose me to after-disappointment. What was I, that Lord Ponsonby should think about me? What could I ever be to him? Still there was no reason which I could discover, why I might not love Lord Ponsonby. I was made for love, and I looked for no return. I should have liked him to have been assured that for the rest of his life mine was devoted to him, In short, though I scarcely ventured to admit it, hope did begin to predominate. I was young, and my wishes had hitherto rarely been suppressed by disappointment.

My reflections were interrupted by my servant, who brought me a letter from George Brummell, full of nonsensical vows and professions. "When," he

wrote, "beautiful Harriette, will you admit me into your house? Why so obstinately refuse my visits? Tell me, I do entreat you, when I may but throw myself at your feet without fear of derision from a public homage on the pavement, or dislocation from the passing hackney coaches?" The rest I have forgotten.

Wellington called on me the next morning before I had finished my breakfast. I tried him on every subject I could muster. On all, he was most impenetrably taciturn. At last he started an original idea of his own; actual copyright, as Stockdale would call it.

"I wonder you do not get married, Harriette!"

(By-the-bye, ignorant people are always wondering.)

"Why so?"

Wellington, however, gives no reason for anything unconnected with fighting, at least since the Convention of Cintra, and he therefore again became silent. Another burst of attic sentiment blazed forth.

"I was thinking of you last night, after I got into bed," resumed Wellington.

"How very polite to the duchess," I observed. "Apropos to marriage, duke, how do you like it?"

Wellington, who seems to make a point of never answering one, continued, "I was thinking—I was thinking that you will get into some scrape, when I go to Spain."

"Nothing so serious as marriage neither, I hope!"

"I must come again to-morrow, to give you a little advice," continued Wellington.

"Oh, let us have it all out now, and have done with it."

"I cannot," said Wellington, putting on his gloves, and taking a hasty leave of me.

"I am glad he is off," thought I, "for this is indeed very uphill work. This is worse than Lord Craven."

As soon as he was gone, I hastened to Curzon Street. The window-shutters of Lord Ponsonby's

house were all closed. How disappointed and low-spirited I felt at the idea that his lordship had left town! Suspense was insufferable; so I ventured to send my servant to inquire when the family were expected in London.

"In about a month," was the answer. "I must forget this man," thought I, "it is far too great a bore": and yet I felt that to forget him was impossible.

Things went on in the same way for a week or two. Amy had closed with Mr. Sydenham's proposal, and changed her name to that of Mrs. Sydenham. She called on Fanny one morning, when her drawing-room was half full of beaux.

"Beautiful Amy, how do you do?" said Nugent, with that eternal smile of his!—it is so vulgar to be always looking joyful, and full of glee, I cannot think what he can mean by it.

"Oh," said Amy, withdrawing her hand, "I must never flirt, nor have any beaux again, I must now lead a pure, virtuous, chaste, and proper life."

"Who has laid such an appalling embargo on you?" I asked.

"Why, do you not know that Sydenham and I are become man and wife? and that I have changed my name and my home for his?"

After wishing Mrs. Sydenham joy I took my leave. On reaching home I found young Freeling in my drawing-room, waiting to pay his respects to me.

I began to think I had scarcely done this young man justice, he appeared so very humble, quiet and amiable. He blushed exceedingly when I addressed him, but—never mind the vanity—it proceeded more from a sort of respectful growing passion towards me, than, as I had at first imagined, from *mauvaise honte*.

Freeling was not fashionable, as I have said before; but I must add that I believe even his enemy could say nothing worse of him.

"I will not deceive you," said I to him one day, seeing he was inclined to follow the thing up steadily, under the impression perhaps that faint heart never

won fair lady. "Some women would make use of your attentions, your money, and your private boxes, as long as possible; but I will say this of myself, I know there is not much to be said in my favour, I never do what I feel to be ungenerous or wrong. I shall receive you with pleasure as a friend at any time; but if you were to sit down and sigh for a twelvemonth, you would never get any further. No speeches, now! You are an interesting young man whom thousands of amiable women would like, and life is short. *L'amour ne se commande pas*, perhaps you are going to tell me; and my answer is, that I am sure it cannot long survive hope, and for you indeed there is none."

Freeling blushed and looked melancholy and undecided.

"Shake hands and forgive me," said I, "*Allons. Un peu de philosophie, mon ami. Que vaut la belle, qui détourne la bouche?* How ridiculous a fine, tall, well-looking young man like you will appear, sitting under one of the willow-trees, in the Green Park!"

Freeling smiled.

"There now, I see it is over already," I continued, and changed the subject, which Freeling had the good sense and good taste never to renew; and what is more, the good heart to take an opportunity of doing me a very essential service, some months afterwards, when I believed he had forgotten me altogether.

"And pray, madam," the reader may ask, "how came you to be such a monster, as to call this kind, generous-hearted man a bore, and a general postman, some time ago?"

I do not know I am sure; I really am very sorry for it now; but then the book never will be finished, if I am to stop to make corrections and alterations; moreover, Stockdale has run away with that part of my manuscript: so to proceed——

Some short time after this mighty elopement, the Duke of Wellington, who, I presume, had discovered

the tough qualities of his heart, which contributed to obtain him such renown in the field of battle, possessed no more merit for home service or ladies' uses than did his good digestion, betook himself again to the wars. He called to take a hasty leave of me a few hours before his departure.

"I am off for Spain directly," said Wellington.

I know not how it was but I grew melancholy. Wellington had relieved me from many duns, which else had given me vast uneasiness. I saw him there, perhaps for the last time in my life. Ponsonby was nothing to me, and out of town; in fact, I had been in bad spirits all the morning, and strange, but very true, and he remembers it still, when I was about to say, "God bless you, Wellington!" I burst into tears. They appeared to afford rather an unusual unction to his soul, and his astonishment seemed to me not quite unmixed with gratitude.

"If you change your home," said Wellington, kissing my cheek, "let me find your address at Thomas's Hotel, as soon as I come to England; and, if you want anything in the meantime, write to Spain; and do not cry; and take care of yourself: and do not cut me when I come back."

"Do you hear?" said Wellington; first wiping away some of my tears with my handkerchief; and then, kissing my eyes, he said, "God bless you!" and hurried away.

Argyle continued to correspond with me; but, if one might judge from the altered style of his letters, Wellington had made a breach in his grace's late romantic sentiments in my favour. Breach-making was Wellington's trade, you know; and little as men of Argyle's nation might be expected to care about breeches, yet the idea of Wellington often made him sigh; and sometimes he whistled, which, with Argyle, was just the same thing.

I forgot to mention, that, on the day after I met a certain great man at Julia's house, my servant

informed me a gentleman in the parlour desired to speak to me.

"Why do not you bring his name?" said I.

"The gentleman says it does not signify," was my footman's answer.

"Go, and tell him that I think it does signify; and that I will not receive people who are ashamed either of me or themselves."

The man hesitated.

"Stay," said I, "I will put it down for you," and I wrote what I had said on a bit of paper.

My servant brought me back the paper, on the blank side of which was written, with a pencil, one word.

I sent it down again, with these words written underneath the word, on purpose to put him in a passion, "Don't know anybody in that shire."

The servant returned once more, with one of his lordship's printed cards, assuring me the gentleman in the parlour was walking about in a great passion.

I desired him to be shown upstairs; and, when he entered, I stood up, as though waiting to hear why he intruded on me.

"I believe, madam," said his lordship, "some apology is due to you from me."

"Are you going to tell me that you were tipsy, when you last did me the favour to mistake my house for an inn, or something worse?"

"No! certainly not," answered the peer.

"Were you quite sober?"

"Perfectly."

"Then your late conduct admits of no apology, and you could offer none which would not humble and greatly wound my pride, to avoid which I must take the liberty of wishing you a good morning."

I then rang my bell and left him.

More than a month had now elapsed since Lord Ponsonby left London, and I perceived no signs of his return. Yet I never forgot him, although half the fine young men in town were trying to please

me. Amy continued to give her parties, but soberly; that is to say, Sydenham insisted on having his house quiet before three in the morning. One evening, when Fanny and Julia dined with me, I got up from my table to open my window, and I saw Lord Ponsonby, who was slowly riding by my house, with his face turned towards my window. This time there could be no doubt as to his blushing. My happiness was now of a nature too pure to be trifled with, and I know I could not endure to have it intruded on by any commonplace remarks. I kept his appearance therefore a profound secret; although I found it the most difficult thing possible to talk on any other subject, I thought these women never would have left me. They took their leave however at last; but not till near twelve o'clock.

I could not sleep a wink all night! At nine the next morning I rang my bell, being quite worn out with attempting it. My maid entered my room with a letter, which had just arrived by the twopenny post. It was as follows;

"I have long been very desirous to make your acquaintance: will you let me? A friend of mine has told me something about you; but I am afraid you were then only laughing at me; *et il se peut, qu'un homme passé, ne soit bon que pour cela!* I hope, at all events, that you will write me one line, to say you forgive me, and direct it to my house in town.

"P."

I will not attempt to describe all I felt on the receipt of this first epistle from Lord Ponsonby. I am now astonished at that infatuation, which could render a girl like me possessed certainly of a very feeling, affectionate heart, thus thoughtless and careless of the fate of another: and that other a young, innocent and lovely wife! Had anybody reminded me that I was now about to inflict perhaps the deepest wound in the breast of an innocent wife, I hope and believe I should have stopped there; and then what

pain and bitter anguish I had been spared; but I declare to my reader that Lady Fanny Ponsonby never once entered my head.

I had seen little or nothing of the world. I never possessed a really wise friend, to set me right, advise or admonish me. My mother had ever seemed happiest in my father's absence, nor did she vex or trouble herself to watch his steps; and I did not know, or at all events I did not think, my seeking Lord Ponsonby's acquaintance would be likely to injure any one of my fellow creatures; or I am sure such a reflection must have embittered that pure state of happiness I now enjoyed.

This was my answer to Lord Ponsonby's letter:

"For the last five months I have scarcely lived but in your sight, and everything I have done or wished, or hoped or thought about, has had a reference to you and your happiness. Now tell me what you wish.

"HARRIETTE."

Reply:

"I fancy, though we never met, that you and I are in fact acquainted, and understand each other perfectly. If I do not affect to disbelieve you, you will not say I am vain; and when I tell you that we cannot meet immediately, owing to a very severe domestic calamity, you will not say I am cold. In the meantime will you write to me? The little watch I have got for you, I am not quite satisfied with. I have seen one in better taste, and flatter. But my poor father is dying and counts the minutes of my absence, or I could have found one to please you. However, you will keep this for my sake. I will leave it myself at your house this evening. I can scarcely describe to you how exhausted I am; for I have passed the whole of the three last nights by the bedside of my sick father, without rest. I know he will have your prayers. At midnight, let us pray for

him, together. He has been suffering more than five months. Adieu, dear Harriette."

Lord Ponsonby's solitary rides with his dog, his paleness, and that melancholy expression of countenance, which at once interested me so deeply, were now accounted for. During three weeks more we corresponded daily. His father continued to exist, and that was all. I learned from his lordship's letters that, on the night we saw him for a few moments at the opera, his father was pronounced out of danger, and country-air was recommended to him, which, having produced no favourable change, nothing now could save him. My happiness, while that correspondence went on, was the purest, the most exalted, and the least allied to sensuality, of any I ever experienced in my life. Ponsonby, I conceived, was now mine, by right mine, by that firm courage which made me feel ready to endure any imaginable evil for his sake. I was morally certain that nothing in existence could love Lord Ponsonby, or could feel the might and majesty of his peculiarly intellectual beauty as I did.

"My beloved," so he wrote to me at last, "my spirits and health fail me; they are worn out and exhausted, with this close confinement. My poor father no longer suffers, or is scarcely sensible. My brother George will take my place by his bedside. Let us meet this evening, and you will console me. I shall go to you at nine."

Lord Ponsonby was then coming to me at last! I began to fear the expression of his eyes, so penetrating, so very bright. I began to think myself under the influence of a dream, and that he was not coming; then I feared sudden death would deprive me of him. I heard the knock, and his footsteps on the stairs; and then that most godlike head uncovered, that countenance, so pale, so still, and so expressive, the mouth of such perfect loveliness; the fine clear, transparent, dark skin. I looked earnestly in his

face, I watched for that characteristic blush which made me fancy his body thought, to be certain of my own happiness! and then my overflowing heart was relieved by a flood of tears.

"My dear, dear, little Harriette," said Ponsonby, drawing me towards him, and passing his arm softly round my waist, "let us be happy now we are met." My smile must have been expressive of the most heartfelt felicity; yet our happiness was of that tranquil nature which is nearer allied to melancholy than to mirth. We conversed together all night, with my head resting on his shoulder. An age could not have made us better acquainted! Ponsonby's health and spirits were evidently quite exhausted by anxiety and want of rest. Neither of us desired anything, while thus engaged in conversation. Yes, perhaps, I did, as my eyes were fixed, for hours, on his beautiful and magnificent countenance, feel my own lips almost tremble, as I thought they would be pressed to his, and Ponsonby seemed to understand and feel my wishes, for he said, in answer to nothing but the expression of my eyes—

"No, not to night! I could not bear your kiss to night. We will dream about it till to-morrow."

Ponsonby assured me, in the course of our *tête-à-tête*, that the first time he had seen me, was one day when I lived at Somers-town two years before. For three or four days after that, he could think of nothing else. He met me with Argyle again, and wished to forget me; but, added he, "I, being the shyest poor wretch in the world, have ever held anything like notoriety in the greatest dread. I abhor it! therefore, when you came out at the opera, and I heard all the fine young men talking about you, it was not so difficult to forget you; and yet, though you did not see me, I was always looking at you, and trying to hear some one talk about you. When we met latterly in the Park, there was something so natural and unaffected, and wild, about your manner, that I began to forget your notoriety."

Ponsonby then told me all about the poor old woman to whom I had given half a crown in the Park; but what he said on that head was far too flattering for me to repeat. It was past five in the morning when we separated.

"You are so ill and fatigued," said I, "dear Ponsonby, that I will not let you come to me to-morrow night."

"Oh, but I must!" answered Ponsonby.

"Indeed you must rest."

"Impossible!" he replied.

We made no professions of love to each other—not one; for we were as certain, as of our existence, that we were mutually adored; and yet we passed the night together, and parted, without a kiss, to meet early the following evening.

CHAPTER VI

At nine o'clock on the following evening, Ponsonby entered the room, an altered man. He was one of the very few persons I have met with in my life, who, from the natural extreme reserve and shyness of their disposition, absolutely required to be a very little tipsy before they can give their brilliant imaginations fair play. Ponsonby had slept, drunk a little more claret, and, what lately had been unusual to him owing to his father's lingering illness, had put on an evening dress. He appeared now so much more beautiful than I had ever imagined any mortal mixture of earth's clay, that I began to lose my confidence in myself and tremble. There was too a look of success about him, for indeed the humblest man on earth must have borrowed courage from the reflection of Ponsonby's looking-glass on that evening: and there he sat for half an hour, laughing and showing his brilliant teeth, while he related to me many witty things which had been said by his uncle, whom he had just left—the George Ponsonby, now no more, who spoke so well on the Opposition side.

"Can one endure this any longer," thought I. "I was getting into a fever. Perhaps he does not love me!"

"You are so proud of being dressed to-night!" I remarked with some drollery, and I thought he never would have ceased laughing at me.

It was very tiresome.

"The fact is," said Ponsonby, in his sweet voice, the beauteous tones of which nobody ever did or will

dispute, "the fact is, I really am proud of it; for I have not worn shoes before for these last three months; but," added he, "do you know what I am most proud of in the world, and which, poor as I am, upon my honour, I would not exchange, at this moment, for a hundred thousand pounds?"

"No!——"

"I will tell you,—my place in your heart and your arms this evening." He put his arms round my waist, and my lips were nearly touching his. Ponsonby's cheek was now tinged with the glowing blush of passion; yet he turned from my kiss like a spoiled child.

"No!" said Ponsonby, shaking his head, "I have a thousand things to tell you."

"I cannot listen to one of them," said I, faintly, and our lips met in one long, long delicious kiss! so sweet, so ardent! that it seemed to draw the life's warm current from my youthful heart to reanimate his with all its wildest passion.

And then!—yes, and then, as Sterne, says,—and then we parted.

The next day, at past three o'clock, Fanny found me in bed.

"How abominably idle!" said Fanny.

I answered that I was not well.

"You do not look very bad," Fanny replied; "on the contrary, I have not seen you look so well, nor your eyes so bright, for some time."

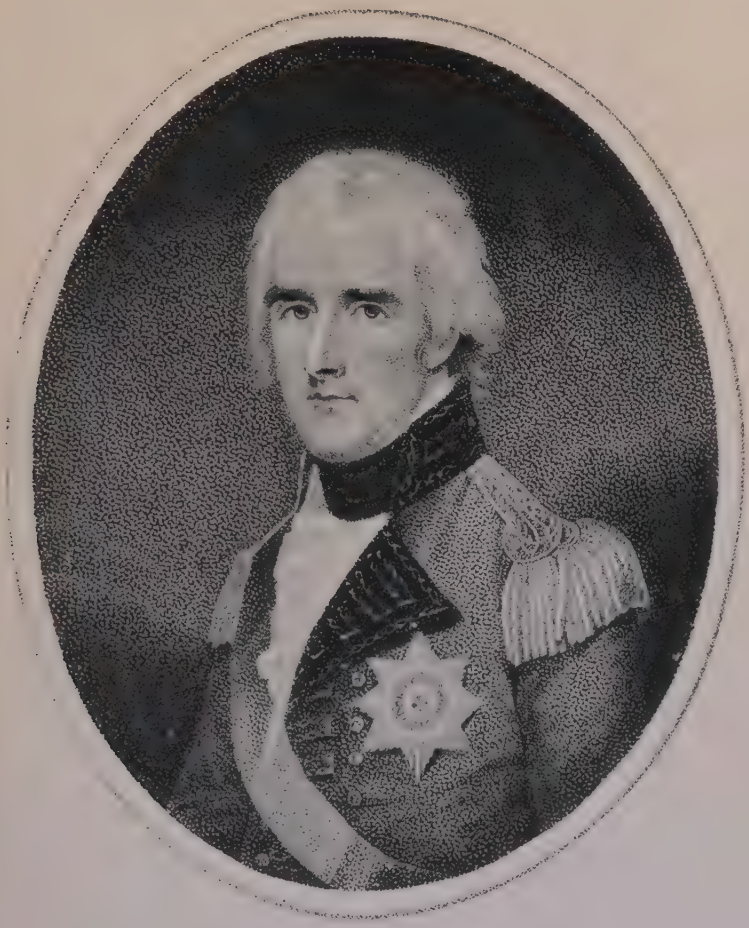
"Well," said I, "if you really think me out of danger, I will get up."

"Come!" answered Fanny, "shall I ring for your maid? I want you to take me to Julia's."

While I was dressing, Fanny informed me that she had given up her own house to go and live with Julia.

"I rather prefer living alone," she continued, "but Julia is so very dull, and my paying half her rent will also be of service to her."

"And some of your beaux may perhaps be brought



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to flirt with her, poor thing!" added I, "for really their neglect is very hard upon her."

Much more beauty, it should seem, is required to please without virtue than with it, since, it is said, that Julia at her mamma's made conquests every where and every hour. Even the Regent himself once said he would travel a hundred miles to have the pleasure of seeing her dance.

Her dancing, we both agreed, was perfection: speaking of what was most truly graceful, effeminate and ladylike.

"Brummel has been with her, making strong love lately," said Fanny.

"Oh, the shocking deceiver! Tell Julia not to believe one word he says."

I inquired how Amy and Sydenham went on.

"Pretty well," answered Fanny. "Sydenham is not only a very good-natured, but a remarkably clever, and well-bred man. Amy tries his patience too, a little, with his passion for books; she is always taking them out of his hand, and making him look at her attitudes before the glass, or her attempts at the shawl-dance."

"What does Sydenham do for the Marquis of Wellesley?" I asked.

"Everything, I believe," Fanny replied. "He appears to write all his letters and papers, in the shape of business; and so I believe he did in India; but I know that Wellesley does nothing except by his advice."

"Pray does Lord Wellesley make his love too, as well as his reputation, by proxy?"

"I do not know," answered Fanny, laughing, "although, I believe he passed a good deal of his time formerly with the lady they call Mrs. Moll Raffles," as Fanny designated her in her zeal to be civil.

"I never saw anybody in such spirits as you to-day," Fanny remarked to me, when we got into the carriage. "I am afraid there is some mischief in the wind. What has become of Lord Ponsonby?"

I was too happy to talk about it, so I contrived to change the subject. "Where shall I take you to?" I inquired.

"To Julia's, where I am now settled. I went there yesterday," was Fanny's answer.

"This world is really made to be laughed at," said Fanny, suddenly leaning her head out of the carriage window.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"That man," said Fanny, "with his grave face and his large board, hoisted up, standing there, challenging the world, as if he were Don Quixote come to life again."

"What for?" said I.

"Bayley's Blacking. Can one conceive anything so absurd?"

I set her down as desired, and begged her to make my excuse to Julia, who was at her window with Horace Beckford, the handsome nephew of Lord Rivers. He appeared inclined to pay her attention, if one might judge by the soft smile which was playing about his features: but then he was eternally smiling.

I found my very constant and steady admirer, Lord Frederick Bentinck, waiting for me, prepared, as usual, to give me a world of advice. He told me that I was going on in a very bad way, and asked me whither I expected to go?

"Where are you going to?" said I, as he walked into my dressing-room, and seemed to admire himself in my large glass.

"I am going to see the Duchess of York," said Fred Bentinck.

"What of that!" I returned. "Where are your gloves?"

"I never wear them, unless at court; but I have got on a new pair of leather breeches to-day, and I want to see how they fit by your glass."

Brummell at this moment was announced.

"How very apropos you are arrived," I remarked.

"Lord Frederick wants your opinion on his new leather breeches."

"Come here, Fred Bentinck!" said Brummell. "But there is only one man on earth who can make leather breeches!"

"Mine were made by a man in the Haymarket," Bentinck observed, looking down at them with much pride; for he very seldom sported anything new.

"My dear fellow, take them off directly!" said Brummell.

"I beg I may hear of no such thing," said I, hastily —"else, where would he go to, I wonder, without his small-clothes?"

"You will drive me out of the house, Harriette,' said Fred Bentinck; and then put himself into attitudes, looking anxiously and very innocently, from George Brummell to his leather breeches, and from his leather breeches to the looking-glass.

"They only came home this morning," proceeded Fred, "and I thought they were rather neat."

"Bad knees, my good fellow! bad knees!" said Brummell, shrugging up his shoulders.

"They will do very well," I remarked. "Fred Bentinck do start a new subject, for first with my latter end and then with your own, this is quite worn out."

"I am sorry," said Fred Bentinck, "very sorry to say that I am afraid you will turn out bad."

"What do you call bad?"

"Why profligate! and wicked."

"Oh! you don't say so? what do you mean by wicked?"

"Why—why, in short," continued Frederick—"in short, shall I drive you down to Greenwich to dinner?"

"And suppose I should grow wicked on the road?" said I.

"Do you know what the Duke of York says of you Fred?" said Brummell.

"The Duke of York talks in a very nasty way,"

said Fred Bentinck, "I—I, for my part, hate all immodest conversation."

"And that is the reason why I save up all the odd stories I can learn, for you and for you only," I observed. "And yet you come here every day?"

"As to you," said Fred, "you are a beautiful creature, and I come to try to reform you, or else what will become of you when you grow old?"

"Age cannot wither me, nor custom stale my infinite variety:" was my reply.

"You are mad!" said Fred Bentinck.

"And you are monstrous top-heavy! and madness being often light-headedness, I wish you would go mad too."

"Apropos, Mr. Brummell," said I turning to him. "I have never yet had time to acknowledge your effusion; and I have the less regret on that score, because I learned from Fanny to-day that you are false-hearted."

"Julia and I," said Brummell, "are very old friends, you know."

"True," said I, "which, I suppose, accounts for her preference of Horace Beckford."

Brummell's pride appeared to take alarm as he inquired if Julia really admired Horace.

"I know nothing whatever about it," answered I, "except that I saw them both at the window together to-day."

Brummell seized his hat.

"Take Fred Bentinck with you," said I.

"Come Fred," said Brummell; "but you have not heard what the Duke of York says of you."

"I can guess," replied Fred, trying to make his goodnatured face severe and cross.

"Oh! he has accused you to your face, I see," reiterated Brummell.

"So much the better," said Fred Bentinck, "a man cannot be too virtuous."

"Talking of virtue," I remarked to Fred, "really that brother Charles of yours made himself rather

too ridiculous by writing those letters to Lady Abdy about his intention to die, in case she continued cruel."

"I have no more patience with Charles Bentinck than you have," said Frederick, "particularly with his bringing Lady Abdy to my brother's house. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself."

"I do not know anything about that, I only allude to the folly of a strong young man like Charles Bentinck, sitting down to his muffins and eggs in a state of perfect health, and, with his mouth crammed full of both, calling for half a sheet of paper to write to Lady Abdy, that he was, at that present writing, about to die! and therefore took up his pen, to request her to be kind to his daughter Georgiana when he should be no more!"

"I do not set up for a remarkably clever fellow," Fred Bentinck observed; "but if I had made such a fool of myself as Charles did in that business, I would blow my brains out!"

"You are helping him out of it nicely," Brummell observed to Fred Bentinck.

"I have no patience with people who expose themselves," continued Fred Bentinck; "because it is in everybody's power to be silent: and, as to love-letters, a man has no excuse for writing them."

"There's no wisdom below the girdle, some philosopher said in old times," I remarked.

"I wish I could break you of that dreadful habit of making such indecent allusions, Harriette!" said Fred Bentinck.

"I never make them to any one but you."

"I'll give you ten pounds if you will let me burn this book," said Bentinck, taking up Fanblas.

"In the meantime," I continued, "you seem to be glancing your eye over it with something like satisfaction, for a man, such as the Duke of York describes, of unblemished reputation for chastity! But, to revert to your brother's dying, with the hot muffins in his mouth, for Lady Abdy. Would not a man,

who really and seriously had made up his mind to die for love, have written a little note and, after sealing it with a death's head or something of that kind, have hidden it somewhere, to be delivered when he should be defunct—instead of talking of death, like Shakespeare's

> '—— certain Lord, neat and trimly dress'd,
> Fresh as a bridegroom and his chin new reap'd.'"

"Thank God," said Fred Bentinck, laughing, "I shall never be in love!"

"Why you adore me, and have done so for the last twelvemonth," said I; "but I want you to transfer your love to a friend of mine."

"Do Fred," said Brummell, taking up his hat, "moderate your passion if possible, and be sure to burn those leather breeches of yours."

"I want you," continued I, after Brummell had left us, "I want you to fall in love with Julia Johnstone."

"She is a fine woman," answered Fred Bentinck; "only I am so afraid she should love me in return, and if you, Julia, or any woman were to love me, I should be sick directly."

"How do you know?" I asked; "who on earth ever tried you that way?"

"Why, there was a woman six years ago," said Frederick, "who certainly did love me."

"How very extraordinary!" I remarked.

"At least," continued Bentinck, "she gave me such proofs as no man could doubt, and I assure you I was never so sick, or so disgusted, in my whole life; and so I am now whenever I happen to meet her."

"*Fiez vous à moi, donc*," said I, "for here you shall ever find safety."

"I know it," answered Bentinck, "and that is why I like you."

He now recollected his intention of visiting the Duchess of York, and took his leave.

Lord Ponsonby and myself met every evening, for

more than a week. We were never tired of conversing with each other. His humour exactly suited mine. In short, though I have been called agreeable all my life, I am convinced that I was never half so pleasant or so witty as in Ponsonby's society. We seldom contrived to separate before five or six o'clock in the morning, and Ponsonby generally came to me as soon as it was dark. Nor did we always wait for the evening to see each other, though respect for Lady Ponsonby made us ever, by mutual consent, avoid all risk of wounding her feelings; therefore, almost every day after dinner we met in the park by appointment, not to speak but only to look at each other.

One morning, being greatly struck with the beauty of a young lady who drove by me in a very elegant little carriage, while I was expecting to see Lord Ponsonby, I inquired of the gentleman who was walking with me if he knew who she was! It was the man well known in the fashionable world by the appellation of Poodle Byng, the title of Poodle having been bestowed on him owing to his very curly white locks, in defence of which he always declared that his head was the original from which all the young men and their barbers took base copies.

"It is," answered Poodle, "that most lovely creature, Lady Fanny Ponsonby, whom we are all sighing and dying for."

She was indeed very lovely, and did not appear to be more than eighteen. I considered her with respect and admiration, unmixed with jealousy. This was not the rose; but she had dwelled with it. I thought that she resembled Lord Ponsonby, and I felt that I could have loved her dearly. "Thank heaven," thought I, "this beautiful girl appears quite calm and happy; therefore I have done her no harm."

In the evening I was eager to praise her to her husband. "She possesses all the beauty of the Jerseys," said I to him; "and what a pretty little foot!" This I had observed as she got out of her carriage in Curzon-street.

"How very odd!" Ponsonby remarked.

"What is odd?"

"Why, I do believe you like Fanny!"

"Be sure of it then," I answered. "I like her as much as I should dislike any woman who did not love you dearly. Listen to me, Ponsonby," I continued, taking his hand, and speaking with steady firmness. "All my religion is from my heart, and not from books. If ever our intimacy is discovered so as to disturb her peace of mind, on that day we must separate for ever. I can but die, and God, I hope, will have mercy on me, very soon after our separation, if ever it should be found necessary; but we are not monsters! therefore we will never indulge in selfish enjoyment at the expense of misery to any one of our fellow creatures, much less one who depends on you for all her happiness."

"And she is very happy, thank God," said Ponsonby, "and I would rather forfeit my life than destroy her peace."

"Be firm in that I entreat you," I replied, "for there can be no rest here nor hereafter without the acquittal of our hearts. Mine was devoted to you with that sincere ardour and deep character of feeling which is so natural to me, before I knew that you were married. I know it now, too late to endure life when you shall have left me; but I can die when her happiness shall require it." Alas! I knew not half the anguish and suffering the human frame can endure, and yet survive!

One night, about a week from the day Ponsonby first visited me, when I did not expect him till midnight, I retired to bed and fell fast asleep, which said long nap neither Ponsonby nor any one else had disturbed. When I awoke, the sun was shining through my curtains. My first thoughts were always on Ponsonby, and I recollected, with a deep feeling of disappointment, that he had promised the night before to come to me by midnight, and I had desired my maid to send him up into my room as soon as he

arrived. I felt for his little watch, which I always placed under my pillow; judge my astonishment to find, attached to it, a magnificent gold chain of exquisite workmanship. I began to think myself in the land of fairies! and still more so, when I observed a very beautiful pearl ring on one of my fingers. I rubbed my eyes and opened them wide, to ascertain beyond a doubt that I was broad awake. A very small strip of writing paper, which I had drawn from under my pillow with my watch, now caught my attention and I read, written with a pencil in Ponsonby's small beautiful character: "*Dors, cher enfant, je t'aime trop tendrement, pour t'éveiller.*"

It was very sentimental and affectionate; for Ponsonby knew how much I required rest. I was very grateful, and yet I thought it altogether exceedingly provoking! How could I be so stupid as not to awake, even when he had his hand under my pillow, in search of my watch! I rang my bell, and inquired of my maid how long she thought Lord Ponsonby had stayed with me the night before.

"More than an hour," was the reply.

"Dear Ponsonby," said I, as soon as she had quitted the room, while I bestowed a thousand kisses on the beautiful watch and chain, "you are the first man on earth who ever sacrificed his own pleasure and passions to secure my repose!"

Lord Ponsonby's father still continued another fortnight in the same hopeless state. His favourite son deeply lamented his illness, and had been indefatigable in his attentions; refusing to visit me or anybody as long as there was hope, or while his father could derive comfort from his son's affections; but, when nothing more could be done, he had sought comfort in the society of the person who loved him best. I should do Lord Ponsonby great injustice were I to say that he ever forgot or neglected his father.

I asked a friend of Lord Ponsonby one day why he did not adore his beautiful wife? He had no idea that I was acquainted with his lordship.

"Lord Ponsonby is always very kind and affectionate to her," was the reply.

"True," I continued; "but I have heard that he does not fly to her for consolation when he is melancholy, nor consult her, nor make a friend of her."

"Lady Fanny is a sweet-tempered child," said he; "but not at all clever: and then, poor thing! she is very deaf, which affliction came on after a violent attack of scarlet fever."

"What a beautiful, sweet and calm expression of countenance she possesses," I remarked, "so pale, that her features at first sight appear only pretty; but on examination they are found perfect; and her dark, clear, brown eyes——"

"So like your own," said the gentleman, interrupting me.

"I have heard that remark made before," I replied, blushing deeply; "but I am not vain enough to credit it."

"With all their beauty," remarked Ponsonby's friend, "men soon grow tired of those Jerseys, with the exception only of Lady ——, with whom the wicked world say the Duke of Argyle has been in love more than twenty years."

"Is not the boy they call Frank supposed to be a son of the duke?" I asked.

"I have heard so; but let us hope it is all vile scandal."

"With all my heart; but how does Lady Fanny Ponsonby pass her time?"

"She draws prettily," he observed: "and she has now got a little companion she is very fond of."

"Who is that?" said I.

"A mouse, which, having one night showed its little face to her ladyship in her drawing-room, she so coaxed him with her dainties for three weeks together, that she contrived to tame him: and now he will eat them out of her lovely hands."

"But then after the mouse is gone to bed," said I, "how does her ladyship amuse herself?"

"With her younger sister, or in writing or drawing. Lady Fanny does not much care for society."

"She is not a flirt, I believe?"

"What man can she think it worth while to flirt with," answered he, "being married to such a one as Ponsonby."

I was charmed to hear my own sentiments from the lips of another, and one of his own sex too.

"You admire Lord Ponsonby then?" said I.

"Admire! depend upon it there is nothing like him in all Europe. I speak of him altogether, as to his beauty, his manners, and his talents; but Lord Ponsonby," he continued, "owing to his extreme reserve and his excessive shyness is very little known. He never desires to be known or appreciated but by his own particular friends: yet I know few so capable of distinguishing themselves anywhere, particularly in the senate, as his lordship: his remarkably fine voice, and his language, always so persuasive and eloquent; besides he is such an excellent politician. He will now, shortly, by the expected death of his father," continued the gentleman, whose name if I recollect well, was Matthew Lee, "become one of the peers of the United Kingdom. I was telling him, the other day, how much we should be disappointed if he did not take a very active part in the debates. 'God forbid!' said Ponsonby. 'It is all I can do to find nerve for yes or no, when there is a question in the House, and that in a whisper.'"

"How came he to be so shy?" I asked.

"And how came it to become him so well?" returned his friend, "for it would make any other man awkward, and Ponsonby is most graceful when he is most embarrassed. I have known him from a boy. We were at school together. The ladies were all running mad for him before he was fifteen, and I really believe, that at eighteen Ponsonby, with the true genuine Irish character and warmest passions, had not looked any woman full in the face; and to this day his friends are obliged to make him half tipsy in order

to enjoy his society. Yet, with all this timidity," he went on, observing that I was never tired of the subject, and could pay attention to no other, "Ponsonby has a remarkably fine high spirit. One night, very late, near Dublin, he met two of his brothers just as they had got into a violent row with three raw-boned, half naked Irish pats. Seeing that his brothers were drunk, Ponsonby began to remonstrate with them, and strove to persuade them to come home quietly, when one of those ruffians struck his youngest brother a very unfair blow with a stick.

"'Now, d—n your hearts and bl—ds!' said Lord Ponsonby, stripping and setting to with the strength and spirit of a prize-fighter.

"His own mother at this moment could not have known her son: the metamorphosis was nearly as laughable as it was astonishing."

I asked how long he had been married?

"Not five years."

"And Lady Fanny's age?"

"Twenty,"

I then asked if he married her for love or money?

"Money!" said Lee, indignantly. "It is now clear to me that you do not know Lord Ponsonby. I was just beginning to suspect from the multiplicity of your questions that you did."

"He was very much in love with her then?" I inquired, without attending to this observation.

"She was not fourteen," answered Lee, "when Ponsonby first met her at her mother's, Lady Jersey's. He was of course, like everybody else, speedily struck with her beauty. She was not deaf then, but shortly afterwards she had a violent attack of scarlet fever, during which her life was despaired of for several weeks: indeed, there was scarcely a hope of her recovery. I remember Ponsonby said to me one night, as we passed by Lady Jersey's house together—'The loveliest young creature I have ever beheld on earth lies in that room dying.' The first time Lady Fanny appeared in her mother's drawing-room she

resembled a spirit so fair, so calm, so transparent. All her magnificent hair, which had before reached and now again descends much below her waist, had been shorn from her beautiful little head. She often took her lace cap off and exhibited herself thus to anybody, to raise a laugh; or perhaps she knew that she was, even without hair, as lovely as ever.

"Lord Ponsonby, as he has told me since, was present when her ladyship first left her room, and soon discovered that she was now afflicted with deafness. He felt the deepest interest, admiration and pity for her. He considered with horror the bare possibility of this sweet, fragile little being, becoming the wife of some man, who might hereafter treat her harshly. Added to this, I fancy," continued Lee, "Ponsonby had discovered that he was not indifferent to her little ladyship; so, to secure her from any of these evils, he resolved to propose for her himself. I need not add that he was joyfully accepted by both mother and daughter. He might have done better," added Lee, "and I fancy Ponsonby sometimes wishes that his wife could be his friend and companion: but that is quite out of the question. Her ladyship is good and will do as she is bid; but, besides her deafness, her understanding is neither bright nor lively. Lord Ponsonby shows her the sort of indulgence and tenderness which a child requires; but he must seek for a companion elsewhere."

Mr. Lee then took leave of me: and a very few days after this conversation had taken place, Lord Ponsonby's father breathed his last in the arms of his son, who immediately left town without seeing me; but he wrote to me most affectionately.

CHAPTER VII

A FEW days after his departure I was surprised by a visit from Sir William Abdy, with whom I was but very slightly acquainted. I thought it strange his paying any visits so immediately after the elopement of his wife, who was a natural daughter of the Marquis Wellesley by a Frenchwoman, who, as I am told, once used to walk in the Palais Royal at Paris, but afterwards became Marchioness of Wellesley.

"I have called upon you, Miss Harriette," said Sir William, almost in tears, "in the first place, because you are considered exactly like my wife,"—my likeness to Lady Abdy had often been thought very striking —"and, in the second, becauseI know you are a woman of feeling!"

I opened my eyes in astonishment.

"Women," he continued, "have feeling, and that's more than men have."

I could not conceive what he would be at.

"You know, Miss Harriette, all about what has happened, and my crim. con. business, don't you, miss?"

"Yes."

"Could you have thought it?"

"Oh yes!"

"And yet, I am sure, Charles Bentinck is worse than I am."

"In what way, pray?"

"Why, a worse head," said Sir William, touching his forehead, "and I don't pretend to be clever myself."

"Is that all? But I would not be so very demonstrative as to touch my forehead, if I were you."

"That Charles Bentinck," said he, half angry, "is the greatest fool in the world; and in Paris we always used to laugh at him."

"But," said I, "why did you suffer his lordship to be eternally at your house?"

"Why, dear me!" answered Abdy, peevishly, "I told him in a letter I did not like it and I thought it wrong, and he told me it was no such thing."

"And therefore," I remarked, "you suffered him to continue his visits as usual?"

"Why, good gracious, what could I do! Charles Bentinck told me, upon his honour, he meant nothing wrong."

"This man is really too good!" thought I, and then I affected the deepest commiseration of his mishap.

"Why did she run away from you?" said I. "Why not, at least, have carried on the thing quietly?"

"That's what I say," said Abdy.

"Because," I continued, "had she remained with you sir, you would have always looked forward with hope to that period when age and ugliness should destroy all her power of making conquests."

"Oh," said Abdy, clasping his hands, "if any real friend like you had heartened me up in this way at the time, I could have induced her to have returned to me! But then, Miss Wilson, they all said I should be laughed at and frightened me to death. It was very silly to be sure of me to mind them; for it is much better to be laughed at, than to be so dull and miserable as I am now."

"Shall I make you a cup of tea, Sir William?"

"Oh! Miss, you are so good! tea is very refreshing when one is in trouble."

I hastened to my bell, to conceal the strong inclination I felt to laugh in his face, and ordered tea.

"Green tea is the best, is it not, Miss?" said Sir William.

"Oh, yes," answered I, "as green as a willow leaf: and in extreme cases like yours I am apt to recommend a little gunpowder."

"Just as you please, Miss."

I asked him, after he had swallowed three cups of tea, whether he did not feel himself a little revived.

"Yes, Miss, I should soon get better here; but you know my house is such a very dull house and in such a very dull street too! Hill-street is, I think, the dullest street in all London, do you know, Miss Wilson."

"True, Sir William! would not you like to go to Margate?"

"Why I was thinking of travelling, for you know in Hill Street, there is her sofa just as she left."

"Very nervous indeed," said I, interrupting him. "I would burn the sofa at all events."

"And then there is her pianoforte."

"Lady Abdy was musical then?"

"Oh, very. She was always at it! I used to be tired to death of her music and often wished she would leave off: but now she is gone Miss Wilson, I would give the world to hear her play Foote's minuet!"

"Or, 'Off she goes,'" added I.

"What is that, pray, Miss?"

"A very lively dance," I answered.

"True, Miss, I recollect my wife used to play it."

"Dear me, Sir William, how could she be so foolish as to run away? I dare say you never interfered with her, or entered her room without knocking."

"Never, upon my honour."

"Well, I always heard you were a very kind, obliging, good-natured husband."

"Yes, and sometimes, when I used to knock latterly, Lady Abdy would not open the door!"

"That was wrong," said I, shaking my head, "very wrong."

"And how could that nasty, stupid fellow seduce her I cannot think!"

"There was good blood in her veins, you know, by the mother's side. Besides, to tell you the truth, I don't think Charles Bentinck did seduce Lady Abdy from you."

"Oh! dear, Miss Wilson, what do you mean?"

"Shall I speak frankly?"

"Oh, Lord a mercy! pray do! I am quite in a fright!"

"I think Fred Lamb was one of her seducers; but how many more may have had a finger in the pie, I really cannot take upon myself to say."

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! Miss Wilson!" said Sir William, grasping my arm with both his hands, "you do not say so? What makes you think so?"

"I have seen Fred Lamb daily and constantly riding past her door. I know him to be a young man of strong passions, much fonder of enjoyment than pursuit; and further, my sister Fanny, one of the most charitable of all human beings, told me she had seen Fred Lamb in a private box at Drury Lane with your wife, and her hand was clasped in his, which he held on his knee!"

"Oh, la, Miss!"

"Come, do not take on so," said I, in imitation of Brummell's nonsense, and striving to conceal a laugh, "leave your dull house in Hill Street, and set off to-morrow morning, on some pleasant excursion. Be assured that you will find fifty pretty girls, who will be so delighted with you as soon to make you forget Lady Abdy."

"But then," said Sir William, "I cannot think how she came to be in the family-way: for I am sure, Miss Wilson, that during all the years we have lived together, I always——"

"Never mind," interrupted I, "go home now, and prepare for your journey, and be sure to write to me, and tell me if your mind is easier."

"Thank you, Miss Wilson! you are all goodness. I'll be sure to write, and I mean to set off to-morrow

morning, and I'll never come back to that nasty, dull, large house of mine again."

"Get the sofa removed," said I, "at all events."

"Yes, Miss, I will, thank you; and the pianoforte. So good-bye, Miss;" and then returning, quite in a whisper, "perhaps, Miss Wilson, when you and I become better acquainted, you'll give me a kiss!"

I only laughed, and bade him take care of himself, and so we parted.

All this nonsense was however very poor amusement to me, now that I had lost Lord Ponsonby. I considered that, although I was by my hard fate denied the pleasure of consoling his affliction, I might yet go into the country and lead the same retired sort of life which he did; and there endeavour by study to make myself rather more worthy of him. "I am a very ignorant little fool," thought I, "but it does not, therefore, follow, that I should remain a fool all my life, like Sir William Abdy." My plan was settled and arranged in less than an hour, and my small trunk packed, my carriage filled with books, and I and my *femme de chambre* on our road to Salt Hill.

I told the landlady of the Castle Inn, that I was come to take up my residence with her for a fortnight, and that I should require a quiet comfortable room to study in. The word study sounded very well, I thought, as I pronounced it, and, after arranging my books in due order, in the pretty rural room allotted to me by my civil landlady, I sat down to consider which of them I should begin with, in order to become clever and learned at the shortest notice, as that good lady provided people with hot dinners.

"Ponsonby, being forty already," thought I, "will be downright out, while I continue to bloom: therefore, when this idea makes him more timid and humble, I should like to improve my powers of consoling him and charming away all his cares. Let me see! What knowledge will be likely to make me most agreeable to him? Oh! politics. What a pity that he does not like something less dry and more lively! But, no

matter!" and I turned over the leaves of my History of England, for George the Second and George the Third, and I began reading the Debates in Parliament. "Let me consider!" continued I, pausing. "I am determined to stick firm to the Opposition side, all my life; because Ponsonby must know best: and yet it goes against the grain of all my late aristocratical prejudices, which, by-the-bye, only furnish a proof how wrong-headed young girls often are."

I began to read a long speech of Lord Ponsonby's late intimate friend, Charles James Fox. "This man," thought I, when I had finished his speech, "appears to have much reason on his side; but then all great orators seem right, till they are contradicted by better reasoners; so, if I read Pitt's answer to this speech, I shall become as aristocratical as ever. I must begin with Pitt, and finish with Fox's answer and objections to Pitt's plan." I tried this method of making a little Whig of myself, *pour les beaux yeux de milord* Ponsonby. "After all," said I, pausing, "it will be no use, and very mean of me, to think one way and profess to think another; and it still strikes me the better reason and the sounder judgment is with Pitt, who seems to go further and embrace a vaster and more solid plan than Fox. The latter finding all that wit and brilliant exercise of humour necessary, makes his appear to me the worse course; then there is too much method in these Whigs, and their abuse of administration becomes pointless; because it seems as though perpetually ready cut and dried; and so vulgar! and opposition is such a losing game! and then I have a sneaking kindness for my king."

"*Quelle dommage!* I cannot be a Whig, for the life of me!" said I, throwing away the book, and quietly reclined my head on my hand, in deep thought as to what next I should study, having determined at once, out of respect to Lord Ponsonby to stand neuter in regard to politics, since I could not make a Whig of myself.

My landlady came in to know what I would have for dinner.

"Oh, ma'am," I exclaimed, pushing aside my book, and walking towards the window, "it is impossible for persons to study if they are to be interrupted by such absurd questions."

The woman begged my pardon.

"Listen to me, madam," said I, with the utmost concentration of dignity; "I have come into this retirement for the purpose of hard reading; therefore, instead of asking me what I want for dinner every day, or disturbing my books or papers, I shall thank you to bring up a tray with a fowl, or anything you like, exactly at five, and, placing it upon that little table, you must, if you please, go out of the room again without saying a single word, and when I am hungry I will eat."

Mine hostess looked at me as if she would have laughed if she had dared, and I felt somewhat of a sort of inclination to join her; however, I contrived to preserve my consequence, and asked, while attempting to assume a severe frown, how old she would guess me to be.

"About sixteen or seventeen, Miss."

"I am almost nineteen, madam," said I, elevating my head, with much pride. "You must not laugh!" I added, seeing that her risible muscles again exhibited symptoms of incipient activity, and well they might; for I was the most tom-boy, childish-looking creature who ever sat down by herself in a large room to study the merits of Pitt and Fox; and, what was worse, one of the most perfectly uneducated young women of my age that ever went to school; but then my school was only a French convent, where there really was nothing which excited in me the slightest curiosity after knowledge, and I never learned a single lesson by heart in my life, nor I believe ever could. The abbess was in despair about me. The confessor said, with Fred Bentinck, that I should come to no good; and I played the old nuns so many

tricks that they were all frightened to death of me.

Being once more left to myself, I snatched up a volume of Shakespeare, *pour me désennuyer un moment*, and opened it at this passage, in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra:*

> The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver;
> Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
> The water which they beat to follow faster,
> As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
> It beggar'd all description: she did lie
> In her pavilion (cloth of gold of tissue),
> O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
> The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
> Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
> With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
> To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
> And what they undid, did.

"How beautiful!" said I, throwing down the book, "Can anything be imagined more glowing or more animated than this description! However I came here to study—and Shakespeare is too amusing to be considered study. True I have heard people remark that many passages of Shakespeare's writings are obscure; yet it seems to me that all the beauties are clear and plain, and the little obscurities not worth puzzling about:—therefore I'll study history; one must know something of that. I'll begin with ancient Greece, never mind English history, we can all get credit for that."

The Greeks employed me for two whole days, and the Romans six more: I took down notes of what I thought most striking. I then read *Charles the Twelfth*, by Voltaire, and liked it less than most people do; and then Rousseau's *Confessions;* then

Racine's *Tragedies*, and afterwards, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. I allowed myself only ten minutes for my dinner. In short, what might I not have read, had not I been barbarously interrupted by the whole family of the Pitchers, who, having once taken a fancy to my society, I had no chance but returning to town as fast as possible after a three weeks' residence at Salt Hill, during which time I had constantly heard from Lord Ponsonby, who was in Ireland; but hoped shortly to join me in town.

I was soon visited by my dear mother. She wished to consult me about what was best to be done to put my young sister out of the way of that most profligate nobleman, Lord Deerhurst, who was, she said, continually watching her in the Park and streets whenever she went out. I could hardly believe that anything wrong could be meant towards a child scarcely thirteen years of age; but my mother assured me that he had been clandestinely writing to her and sending her little paltry presents of gilt chains, such as are sold by Jews in the streets; these said trumpery articles being presented to my sister Sophia, in old jewel-boxes of Love and Wirgman, in order to make it appear to the poor child that they were valuable.

"I see no remedy," said my dear mother, "but sending Sophia to some school at a distance; and I hope to obtain her father's consent for that purpose as soon as possible. No time is to be lost, Sophia being so sly about receiving these things that I only found it out by the greatest accident. The last were delivered to her by a young friend of hers, quite a child, to whom Lord Deerhurst addressed himself, not having been able to meet with Sophia lately."

I was very much disgusted with this account, and quite agreed with my mother that it would be the safest plan to send the child away.

Before she took her leave, she assured me that, if possible, Sophia should depart immediately.

The next day I went to visit Fanny. Colonel Armstrong was with her. I allude to the Duke of

York's aide-de-camp. The Earl of Bective was also there.

I inquired how Amy went on.

Sydenham was beginning to consider her evening parties rather a bore. Julia, they said, was growing more gracious towards George Brummell than Colonel Cotton liked.

Armstrong happening to be disengaged, which was seldom the case, proposed our taking Amy, who was a great favourite of his, by surprise, in the absence of Sydenham, who was at Brighton assisting Lord Wellesley to take care of Moll Raffles.

"Do you propose dining with her?" said I.

"Why not?" inquired Colonel Armstrong.

"I hope she will treat you better than she does her own sisters when we try her pot-luck."

"I am not at all particular," said Armstrong.

"I never saw but one man," retorted I, "among all Amy's train of admirers, whom she did not contrive to cure of their temerity in intruding themselves to dinner. The Baron Tuille's ardent love was, for six months, proof against Amy's bill of fare. Amy used to sit and sit till hunger would not permit her to fast any longer, and at last she would say, 'Baron! I am going down to dinner: but I have nothing to offer you but a black pudding!' 'Note!' the Dutchman always answered, 'Note! noting I like so vel!'"

"What," said Armstrong, "does she never have anything but black pudding?"

"Oh! yes," I replied, "sometimes toad-in-a-hole, or hard dumplings; but black pudding takes the lead."

Fanny, with all her good nature, began to laugh as she related the following little anecdote, which had occurred while I was at Salt Hill, apropos to Amy's penchant for a black pudding. My little sister Sophia had been permitted to go and dine with Amy one day, having been particularly invited a week before. Nevertheless, when she arrived Amy appeared to start as though surprised and said, "Oh! by-the-bye, I forgot to order my dinner, and my maid and man are both

out, with letters and cards of invitations. However I can soon manage to get a black pudding broiled. You will not mind running to South Audley-street for a pound of black pudding? Shall you, my dear?"

"Oh, no!" replied Sophia, reddening up to the eyes at the vile proposal, having lately become a coquette, from being told that she was an angel, and being really a very ladylike girl at all times; and just now she wore her smartest dress. However, she always said yes to whatever people asked her, wanting courage or character to beg leave to differ from anybody's opinion.

The said black pudding, then, was put into her hand by the vulgar, unfeeling pork-butcher, enveloped only by a small bit of the dirty *Times* newspaper, just sufficiently large for her to take hold of it by in the middle.

Sophia, being a remarkably shy, proud girl, felt herself ready to sink, as she walked down South Audley-street at that very fashionable hour of the day, with such a substitute for a reticule flourishing quite bare in her hand, as a greasy black pudding! She tried hanging down her arm: but rose it again in alarm, lest she should spoil her gay new frock. Then a ray of good sense, which shot across her brain, her head I mean, induced her with an effort of desperation to hold the thing naturally, without attempting to conceal it; but, Oh, luckless fate! at the very moment poor Sophia had obtained this victory over her feelings, whom should she bolt against, all on a sudden in turning down South-street, but the first flatterer and ardent admirer of her young graces, Viscount Deerhurst!

The black pudding was now huddled up into the folds of her new frock: then she rued the day when pocket-holes went out of fashion. Deerhurst now, holding out his hand to her, her last desperate resource was to throw down the vile black pudding as softly as possible behind her, and she then shook hands with his lordship.

"Miss! Miss!" bawled out, at this instant, a

LORD COVENTRY

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comical-looking, middle-aged Irish labourer, who happened to be close behind her, and had picked up the delicate morsel, at the instant of its fall.

Thrusting forward the spectral lump, "Miss! Miss! how comed you then dear, to let go o' this and never miss it? Be to laying hold of it at this end, honey! It's quite clean, dear, and sure and you need not be afear'd to handle it at that same end," added Pat, giving it a wipe, with the sleeve of his dirty ragged jacket.

Deerhurst, who it must be allowed possesses a great deal of natural humour, could stand this scene between Pat and Sophia no longer. and burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, while poor Sophia, almost black in the face with shame and rage, assured the man she had dropped nothing of the sort, and did not know what he meant—and then she ran away so fast that Deerhurst could not overtake her, and she got safe home to her mother's, leaving Amy to watch at her window the arrival of her favourite black pudding.

Colonel Armstrong was absolutely delighted with this account; but said he should decline her pot-luck, as it is vulgarly called. He nevertheless wished us, of all things, to accompany him to her house, and which we agreed to.

We found Amy in the act of turning over the leaves of Mr. Nugent's music book, and Mr. Nugent singing an Italian air to his own accompaniment, ogling Amy to triple time.

The man commonly called King Allen, now Lord Allen, appeared to be only waiting for a pause of harmony in order to take his leave.

"Ha! How do you do?" said Amy, and Nugent arose to welcome us with his everlasting laugh.

"Well, Harriette," said Amy, "you are come back, are you! I have heard that you went into the country with your whole library in your carriage, like Dominie Sampson; and, let me see, who was it told me you were gone mad?"

"Your new and interesting admirer, his Grace of Grafton, perhaps; for I have heard that he is matter-of-fact enough for anything."

"It is a pity, my dear Harriette, that you continue to have such coarse ideas!" retorted Amy, *en faisant la petite bouche*, with her usual look of purity, just as if she had not been lately receiving the sly hackney coach visits of the old beau.

Armstrong changed the conversation by telling Amy that he had some idea of intruding upon her to dinner the next day.

"Oh, I really shall give you a very bad dinner, I am afraid," said Amy, having recovered from her growing anger towards me, in real alarm.

"My dear Mrs. Sydenham," replied Colonel Armstrong, earnestly, "I hate apologies, and indeed, am a little surprised that you should pay yourself so poor a compliment as to imagine for a moment any man cared for dinner; for vile, odious, vulgar dinner in your society. Now for my part, I request that I may find nothing on your table to-morrow, but fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, pastry, fruit and good wine. If you get anything more, I will never forgive you."

Amy's large, round eyes opened wider and wider, and so did her mouth, as Armstrong proceeded; and, before he had got to the wine, she became absolutely speechless with dismay. Armstrong, however, appeared quite satisfied, remarking carelessly that he knew her hour and would not keep her waiting.

"Is anybody here who can lend me two shillings to pay my hackney-coach?" said Allen.

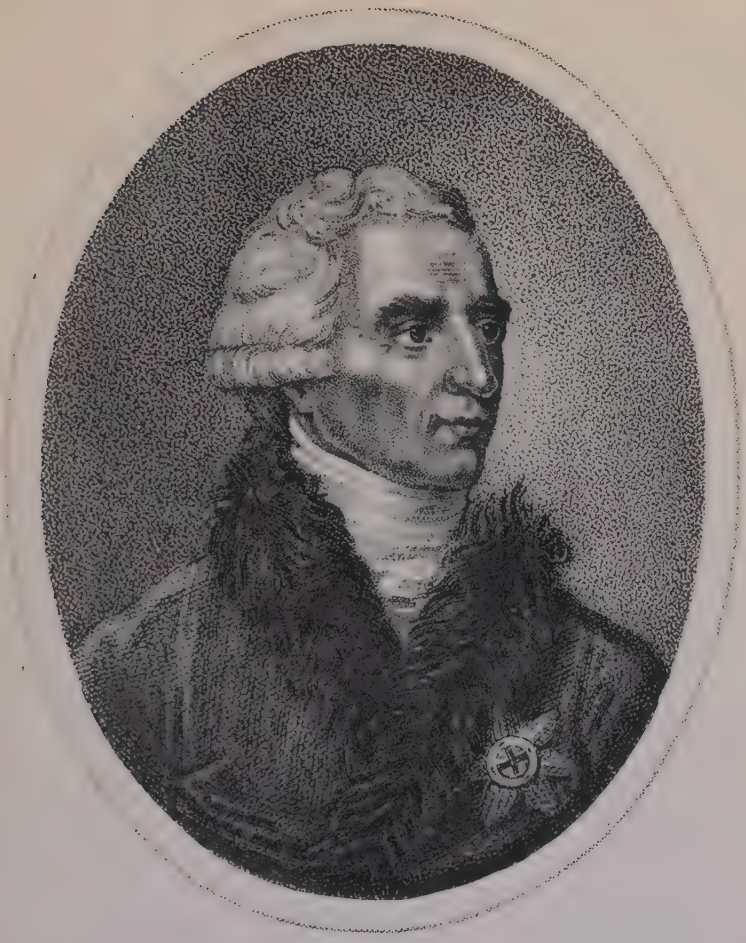
"No change," was the general answer; for everybody knew King Allen!

The beaux having left us, Amy opened her heart, and said we might partake of her toad-in-a-hole, if we liked; but that she must leave us the instant after dinner.

"What for?" Fanny inquired.

"Nothing wrong," answered Amy, of course.

"Very little good, I presume," said I, "if we may



DUKE OF GRAFTON

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judge from his appearance; however," taking up my bonnet, "I do not want to run foul of the Duke of Grafton, since he votes me mad:" and I took my leave.

The next morning I received a letter from Lord Ponsonby to acquaint me that I might expect him in town by eight o'clock on the following evening. It is not, however, my intention to enter into many more minute details relative to my former unfortunate passion for Lord Ponsonby. This is not a complete confession, like Jean Jacques Rousseau's, but merely a few anecdotes of my life, and some light sketches of the characters of others, with little regard to dates or regularity, written at odd times, in very ill health. The only thing I have particularly attended to in this little work has been, not to put down one single line at all calculated to prejudice any individual, in the opinion of the world, which is not strictly correct; and though I have, in writing of people as I have found them, only done as I would be done by, and as I request my friends will do by me, who never wished yet to pass for better than what I really am: yet my gratitude has not permitted me to publish even the most trifling faults of the few who have acted kindly towards me.

With regard to my sisters, I never had but one, and she has ceased to exist, who evinced the least regard for me. I am naturally affectionate, and my heart was disposed to love them all, till years of total neglect have at last compelled me to consider them as strangers. Some of them are my enemies. My sister Amy ever made it her particular study to wound my feelings, and do me all the injury in her power; and having occasion, in a moment of the deepest distress, to apply to Lady Berwick for a little assistance, she refused me a single guinea, notwithstanding, in promoting her marriage with Lord Berwick, and on various other occasions, I certainly did my best, and had done many acts of friendship towards her previous to that period. Neither does

this want of feeling for me proceed from any ill opinion they have formed of my heart or character: for, during our dear mother's last illness, Lady Berwick remained at her country house, in spite of all I could say to her in my daily communications, as to the immediate danger of that dear parent, and her excuse, which she has often expressed, for this heartless conduct was that, since Harriette remained with her mother, she felt sure that no care or attention would be wanting that anybody could afford her. However, it is necessary for the sake of justice to relate the good with the bad: thus then, be it known, that if Lady Berwick would not come up to town to attend the dreary couch of a most tender parent; she wrote to me every day notes of inquiry, nay more, she sent fine apples and baskets of grapes from her garden up to the hour of my lamented mother's death.

These sketches, or memoirs, or whatever my publisher and editor may think proper to designate them, —for my own part I think it quite tiresome enough to write a book as fast as I can scribble it, without composing either a preface or a name for it—were begun several years ago, merely to amuse myself. I am now only alluding to a few pages of it, for I soon grew tired of my occupation, However, the little I had done pleased my own acquaintances so much that they all advised me to continue.

The Hon. George Lamb, having been good enough to read a comedy which I attempted, was so polite as to say, and I have his letter now before me, that although it was too long, and deficient in stage-tact, there was no lack of wit and native humour about it, and further, he thought my talents well calculated for writing a light work in the form of either novel or sketch-book. He also advised me to put my former name of Harriette Wilson to the work, which he doubted not would the better ensure its sale.

Thus, being almost flattered into something like a good opinion of myself, I ventured one morning to

wrap myself up in my large cloak, and put my little unfinished manuscript into my reticule, for I determined not to write another page till I had ascertained whether it was worth publishing. Thus equipped, I ventured in much fear and trembling to wait upon the great Mr. Murray, as Lord Byron always satirically called him. "He," thought I, "being the friend and publisher of Lord Byron (as Dr. Johnson has it, who slays fat oxen, must himself be fat), should be wiser than George Lamb or anybody else, except Lord Byron alone: therefore I will stand by his decree."

I told Murray that I had so little confidence in myself, that I really could not be induced to go on with my work till I had obtained his verdict on the few pages I ventured to offer for his inspection.

Murray looked on me with as much contempt as though Ass had been written in my countenance. Now I know this is not the case. He said, with much rudeness, that I might put the manuscript on his table and he would look at it, certainly, if I desired it.

I asked when I should send for it.

"Whenever you please," was his answer; as though he had already recorded his decision against me and made his mind up not to look at it.

I promised to send for it the next evening. I did so, and the manuscript was returned without an observation. "No doubt," thought I, "it is all nonsense. I only wish I was quite sure that he had read it! because else it were really cruel thus to damp a beginner—who might have done something perhaps, with due encouragement. I am almost certain that it is trash; but I will be still more assured, lest the mania of scribbling should in some moment of poverty attack me again." However, beginning now to feel as much contempt for my manuscript as the Vicar of Wakefield did for his horse, or as I have since felt for the famed Bibliopolist of Albemarle Street, notwithstanding his carriage was numbered

with those which followed in the funeral procession of the lamented Byron, I could not present my lucubrations to another publisher as my own: my nerves would not permit it, and I therefore offered it to Messrs. Allman, of Princes Street, Hanover Square, as the first attempt of a young friend of mine. I was received by one of those gentlemen with much politeness, and was requested to allow them four days to send their answer. They fixed their time, and I promised to send for my little manuscript on the day they appointed. It was sealed up, and directed ready for my servant when he called for it. The envelope enclosed a few lines from Messrs. Allman, stating their readiness to publish the work, which they did not consider libellous—sharing the expenses and the profits with me.

On the receipt of this note, which I have now in my possession, I got into a rage with old purblind Murray. "I wish," thought I, "I wish I could make rhymes! I would send him a copy of verses to thank him." The worst of it was I had never made a single rhyme in my life, and, when I had tried to make two lines jingle togther, everybody said they had the merit of being infinitely below par; but even that I considered very much better than vile mediocrity in poetry. In short there was no rhyme about them and very little reason. However, I thought that anything would do for Murray, who had been so rude to me; therefore, in a few minutes, I managed to compose and seal up the following state of the case,—which said composition my reader cannot say I have encouraged him to lose time in perusing.

THE MAIDEN EFFORT OF A VIRGIN MUSE.

I never thought of turning poet,
And all my friends about me know it,
Till t'other day. I'll tell you why.
Alas! the story makes me sigh!
I tried, in prose, a few light sketches,
Of characters—pats, players, and such wretches,

MR. MURRAY

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Which my own folks said were pretty:
In fact, I thought them downright witty;
And, for the good of future ages,
I sallied forth, with these few pages,
To a publisher's, in such a hurry,
As to arrive too soon for that beau-thing, Murray,
Who coolly kept the lady waiting.
An old beau must have time for prating.
At last he came. Oh, mercy! Oh, my stars!
What an appalling beau-costume he wears!
A powdered bob, spectacles, and black coat!
I wish to heaven I had never wrote!
Or ta'en my book, so not here, anywhere,
Sure this won't do! The man's a bore or bear!
My charms to him were nought: nor my oration:
But what care I for Murray's admiration!
If I had penned some *Quarterly* cupidity,
He would have gladly borne with its stupidity.
"At length, Sir," cried I, in a fuming rage,
"Pray, just peruse, at least, a single page."
With a most supercilious kind of glance,
"Hum," drawled out Murray, "you've not the slightest chance."
"Pray, Sir, must one come here in a bob-wig?"
Cried I, in my turn, striving to look big;
And then went home to mourn my waste of paper,
Pens, ink, time, and e'en my last wax taper.
Prosers, methought, require an education;
But poets gain, by birth, their own vocation.

I merely pin it into my manuscript because it is ready written, and helps to fill up the book, which, I have undertaken for several reasons: first, because I hope to get some money by it; secondly, because a certain duke and his son, all! all! honourable men, and with very honourable titles and ancient names, have taken such an unfair advantage of my generous treatment of them, that I think they ought to be exposed——

Else they will deceive more men.

But this is not all. My former errors are well known, and, since they have told their story I must in justice to myself relate mine. To proceed with it in form, I perhaps ought to relate at large all the raptures of my meeting with Lord Ponsonby when he returned from Ireland, how struck I was with the pale cast of thought, which enfeebled the brightness of that sweet countenance, only to increase the interest he previously inspired; how infinitely his deep mourning became him; how he had loved me for the very thing cross Amy had laughed at me, and called me Dominie Sampson for; how he sent me Voltaire's tragedy of *Zaire*, and how delighted he was to find that I felt and understood all its beauties; how he one day called me his angelic Harriette! and further declared that, had he known me sooner he would never have married any other woman! How I used to fancy I could feel his entrance into his wife's private box at the opera, without seeing him, as though the air suddenly should become purer; how I have astonished Fanny by guessing the very instant of his approach, without looking towards his side of the house: how he would watch and follow me in my walks; how he declared that he had never in his whole life felt such tenderness of affection for any woman on earth, combining all a father ought to feel, with the wildest passion his first youth had been capable of, with many other matters which it would be tedious to write now: but all this love is gone by and, for the crime of attaching myself to a married man, I have deeply suffered: and all my affections are now fixed on another, to whom I am bound for life: and, being just about to keep a pig and a few chickens, I really cannot mount up the ladder again: and, why should I dwell too long on the wild romantic follies of my very youthful days?

During the three short years our intercourse lasted, our passion continued undiminished—increase it could not. I do in truth believe, though it was a wicked thing, no two people on earth ever loved each other

better, and the restraint and difficulties we laboured under kept our passion alive as it began. Often, after passing the early part of the evening together, finding it so difficult to separate, we drove down in a hackney-coach to the House of Lords, and in that coach have I waited half the night merely for one more kiss and the pleasure of driving with Ponsonby to his own door.

These three happy years of my life produced very few anecdotes, which I can recollect, worth relating; for I had neither eyes nor ears nor thoughts but for Ponsonby. The old Scotch beggar woman in the park, who had been the cause of my appearing advantageously to his lordship, was my constant visitor, and I contributed to her comforts as far as I could. She had once been in very easy circumstances, and was then in the habit of receiving every possible attention from her kind country-woman Lady Cottrell.

The old woman used to come to dine with me in a rich brocade silk gown, which stood absolutely alone, and once caused my equally stiff, old, powdered footman to laugh; but as it was I believe for the first time in his life I forgave him.

Apropos of that same Mr. Will Halliday, who though always in print never expected the honour of being published, everybody wished to know why I kept such a clock-work, stiff, powdered, methodistical looking servant, with a pig-tail; whom one might have taken for Wilberforce himself instead of Will Halliday, and yet that piece of mechanism, with his hair to match, used to steal my wine, as though he had forgotten all about his commandments; and when I reproached him with it, he declared that it was impossible; because, to use his own words, "I am the most particlerst man as is"; and, because I preferred losing my wine to being talked to, I submitted.

"Mr. Will," I used to say, "yes and no are all I want to hear from any footman; if they will say more to me than this I shall wait upon myself."

Will would console himself on these occasions with a young companion of mine, while she remained with me, whenever he could find her disengaged or she had the misfortune to be in the parlour while he was laying the cloth.

"Miss Hawkes," he would begin, to her great annoyance, "Miss Hawkes, now you see my missis don't like a sarvant to say nothing but yes and no. Now sometimes, as I says, Miss Hawkes, yes or no won't do for everything. Missis was very angry about my speaking yesterday; but, if I haddunt a told her I was the most particlerst man as is she might a thort I drinkt her wine, because I keeps the key of the cellar: and then again, Miss Hawkes, respecting o' my great coat: I wants to tell missis, as how it's a mile too wide in the back; for you see Miss, Missis don't observe them ere things. Will you be so good, Miss, as to mention that I wants to show her how my great coat sets behind?"

"I will go and tell her directly," said Miss Hawkes, delighted with an excuse to get away.

"Well then," said I, in answer to what Miss Hawkes told me, "I will look at the man's coat after dinner, only I am sure I shall laugh if he is to walk about the room, sporting his beautiful shape."

Having thus, for once, given Will liberty of speech, I was in dread of its consequences at dinner-time. As soon as he had withdrawn the cloth and placed the dessert upon the table, he began to cough and place himself in an attitude of preparation. "Now it is coming!" thought I, and I saw Miss Hawkes striving to restrain her inclination to laugh out loud, with all her might.

Will began sheepishly, with his eyes and his fingers fidgeting on the back of a chair; but he grew in height, and in consequence, as he went on. "I was a saying to Miss Hawkes, madam, that, respecting o' your commands, that yes and no wont do for everything. Now ma'am respecting o' my great coat——"

"You had better put it on, William," said I, hold-

ing down my head that I might not look at Miss Hawkes.

"Yes, ma'am; sartanly ma'am," said Will, bustling out of the room, and returning in an instant equipped in a drab great coat, so very large behind, that it made him look deformed; but did not, in the least, alter his usual way of strutting about the room, like a player,

> Whose conceit
> Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich,
> To hear the wooden dialogue and sound,
> 'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage.

So, between my horror of making free with John Bull, and my wish to laugh at my footman, I was in perfect misery.

"Take it off, William," said I, faintly, and without venturing to raise my head, feeling that another glance at Will, eyeing his person all over, with his sharp little, ferret-eyes, would have finished me. "Take it off, and carry it to the tailor's."

But Will, having once received a *carte blanche* for more than his usual yes and no, was not so easily quieted.

"Thank you, ma'am, you are very good ma'am. I'll step down to-night, with it; for the other evening, ma'am, when you sent me to carry back that ere pheasant, my Lord Lowther's servant brought you I says, says I, to Sally, 'as it is such a wet night Sally, I wont put on my laced hat,' so I claps on an old plain one; and, when I comed to St. James's Street, there was a bit of a row with some of they there nasty women at the corner, and, you see, ma'am, this ere coat, sticking out, in this ere kind of a way behind, and with that large cane of mine, there was a man, says he, to me, 'Here, watchman! why dont you do your duty?'"

It was now all over with our dignities. Will, in finishing his pathetic speech, appeared almost on the point of shedding tears. We both, in the same in-

stant, burst into an immoderate fit of loud laughter, when Will had the good sense to leave us.

The next day Fanny, Miss Hawkes, and myself drove into Hyde Park. We there met Sophia, with her eldest sister, looking very pretty, and above all very modest. My carriage was soon surrounded by trotting beaux, whom I could not listen to, because that adored, sly, beautiful face of Ponsonby's was fixed on me, *à la distance*. With all my rudeness and inattention I could not get rid of Lord Frederick Beauclerc. The rest went round to Fanny's side. This was better than going over to the enemy. Ponsonby knew me and himself too well to be jealous; but, not daring to speak to me or hear what I said, he looked unhappy, as I guessed, at his friend, Fred Beauclerc's persevering attention; and I proposed to Fanny that we should take a drive down Pall Mall.

"Is that Mr. Frederick Lamb's ghost?" said Fanny.

"Where do you mean?" I inquired, and turning my head round, indeed saw Fred Lamb, who had, I believe, just returned from abroad. He blushed a little, and ordering my coachman to stop, told me that I looked remarkably well and that he knew all about me.

"So you have cut poor Argyle, and are in love again with a man of my acquaintance?" he continued.

"You are mistaken," said I, reddening.

"It may be so," rejoined Fred, "but I rather think I am right."

I shook hands with him, and hoped we were parting good friends.

"I say, Miss Hawkes," said Will Halliday, in the course of the evening, after we got home, for he generally contrived to *dédommager* himself, for the silence I imposed on him, by forcing a few words on Miss Hawkes' attention—"If we had a gone a little

furder down Pall Mall to-day, we should a seen that ere Prince Coburg."

"Really!"

"Yes, Miss: but, laws! Miss, do you know he was nothing in his own country, and had nothing but a small principality."

About ten o'clock in the evening, when Miss Hawkes had retired to rest, and I was sitting alone with my book, Fred Lamb was announced to me. I desired William to say that it was rather too late, and that I was shortly going to bed.

He returned to inform me that Mr. Lamb knew I never went to bed before midnight, and therefore begged I would permit him to chat with me for half an hour, so, feeling puzzled how to excuse myself, he was desired to walk upstairs.

He talked to me for more than an hour, of Argyle, Lord Ponsonby, and his own former affection for me. He then became a little more practical than I liked, first taking hold of my hand, and next kissing me by force. I resisted all his attempts with mild firmness. At last he grew desperate, and proceeded to very rough, I may say, brutal violence, against my fixed determination. I was never very strong; but love gave me almost supernatural powers to repel him; and I contrived to pull his hair with such violence, that some of it was really dragged out by the roots.

Fred Lamb was not of a mild or patient temper. In a moment of disappointment and fury at the pain I must have inflicted on him, though it was certainly done only in self-defence, he placed his hand on my throat, saying, while he nearly stopped my breath, and occasioned me almost the pangs of suffocation, that I should not hurt him another instant. He spoke this in a smothered voice, and I did in truth believe that my last moments had arrived. Another instant would have decided the business; but he, thank God, relinquished his grasp at my throat. He is however mistaken if he believes I have ever forgotten the agony of that moment. He arose from

the sofa. His rage, I fancy, being converted into shame and fear of what I might tell the world, or, perhaps, he was really shocked at the violence which he had been guilty of. It may easily be imagined that once free from so frightful a grasper of throats, I was not long in obtaining my room upstairs and double-locking my door. Fred Lamb did not attempt to speak to, much less detain me, and in a very few minutes afterwards I heard him leave the house.

"Thank God!" I ejaculated, from the very bottom of my heart; and I began to breathe more freely although I was some time before I recovered my fright.

Fred Lamb was a man of the world, and the next day he no doubt said to himself "this is a bad story, both for my vanity and my character: for I have been very brutal. The best way now will be for me to tell it first to all her friends"; and he accordingly went about making light of the story, as though he had not any reason to be ashamed.

"Do you know," said he, to several of my acquaintances, who afterwards repeated it, "do you know that Harriette is so in love with John Ponsonby, that she was cruel even to me last night! I tried force too; but she resisted me like a little tiger, and pulled my hair!"

"Be it so," thought I, and I never told the story, till now. In fact, I was a good deal afraid of Fred Lamb at that time, and could not but feel provoked at the idea of a young man going about the world, always laughing, and showing off the character of a fine, good-tempered, open-hearted, easy, generous, sailor-like fellow, and who yet could take me from a rich man, to leave me starving at Somers-town as he had done, without once making me the offer of a single shilling, and then return to me, as though all this selfishness had secured him a right over my person, to persecute me with brutal force and lay hold of my throat, so as to put me in fear of my life, because I was not his humble slave any day in any week he

happened to return from the Continent: and I am sure Mr. Frederick Lamb cannot assert that, on the day I believed he meant to have been my last, he had ever given me one single guinea or the value of a guinea.

He is now an ambassador, and just as well off as ambassadors usually are; yet, in my present poverty, I have vainly attempted to get a hundred pounds out of him. He has occasionally indeed sent me ten or five pounds; but not without much pressing, and he has not yet paid my expenses to Hull and back.

So much for the high-spirited Fred Lamb! With his brother George I have only a very slight acquaintance; but am much indebted for the very polite, friendly and condescending interest that gentleman has been pleased to take in my welfare.

CHAPTER VIII

About this time, I received a letter from Sir William Abdy, beginning thus:

"Dear, pretty Miss Wilson,

"You told me to be sure and write.

"I am a good deal better for the journey, though I have not seen anybody so pretty as you, since I left you. . . ."

The rest of this eloquent epistle may be dispensed with.

Lord Ponsonby often rated me about Lord F. Beauclerc, his relation, whom he always called Fred Diamond Eye; and Fred Beauclerc was continually teasing me about Ponsonby. I assured him that it was all nonsense.

"I know better," Fred Beauclerc would answer, "and yet I am fool enough to love a woman who is going mad for another man. However, if I get well over this folly, I will for the rest of my life reign lord paramount or nothing."

His lordship really loved me, and above all he loved my foot. I was never in his opinion *assez bien chaussée;* therefore, he used to go about town with one of my shoes in his pocket, as a pattern to guide him in his constant search after pretty shoes for me.

Fred Beauclerc is a sly, shy, odd man, not very communicative, unless one talks about cricket. I remember when the Marquis of Wellesley did me the honour to call on me and tell me what a great man he was, and how much he had been talked of in

the world—how often carried on men's shoulders without nags, with other reminiscences of equal interest, Fred Beauclerc, the Diamond Eye, cut me for Moll Raffles I accused him of it, laughing, and he laughingly acknowledged the intrigue.

"I could not endure the idea of your receiving that vain old fool, Lord Wellesley," said Beauclerc.

"No harm, believe me!" I replied. "Mere curiosity induced me to have the man up, to see if he was like his brother; but you are very welcome to Mrs. Raffles; she'll make an excellent wife to a divine. Not that I know or care anything about the lady!"

"And what think you of Wellesley? said the little parson.

"Why, I suppose I must either say he is clever and brilliant or be called a fool myself; so, instead of answering your question, I'll tell you what he says to me to-morrow, after I shall have acquainted him with your intrigue with his *belle amie* Raffles."

"You are not serious?" said the good clergyman, in a great fright.

"Yes, I am quite serious I assure you."

"What! You spoilsport! You make mischief! I would not have believed this of you."

"You only do me justice—but I will tell notwithstanding: and if I either spoil your intrigue, or do mischief to anybody except the noble marquess, never forgive me."

"I never will," said Beauclerc seriously, and so we parted.

In the evening a remarkably fine-looking man requested to speak to me, from the Marquis of Wellesley. He wore a large brilliant on the third finger of his very white hand and was peculiarly elegant in his dress. I offered him a chair with much politeness, feeling really something like respect for Lord Wellesley's good taste in sending me such an amiable substitute for a little grey-headed, foolish old man. The gentleman bowed low and refused to sit. He told me that he came from the Marquis of

Wellesley merely to say, that, if I were disengaged, he would have the pleasure of calling on me in less than an hour.

"*C'est son valet, sans doute,*"—thought I: and sent my compliments to Lord Wellesley.

Wellesley's carriage drove up to my door in less than an hour after his gentleman had left me. His lordship appeared the very essence of everything most *recherché*, in superfine elegance. He was in fact all essence! Such cambric, white as driven snow! Such embroidery! Such diamonds! Such a brilliant snuff-box! Such seals and chain! And then, the pretty contrast between the broad, new, blue ribbon across his breast, and his delicate white waistcoat!

It was too much, too overpowering for a poor, honest unaffected Suissess like me:—and I almost wished myself safe in my Canton de Berne; for never before stood I in such presence, nor breathed I in such essence! What a pretty little thing too it would be, methought, if it were but once deposited unhurt in one's bonnet-box, and one could shut him down whenever the essence became too strong for one's nerves. It was a graceful thing too in miniature, and its countenance was good and its speech was all honey, until I very quietly and very unceremoniously mentioned the worthy clergyman having passed the whole of the night preceding with Moll Raffles, consoling her, *en prêtre*, for his lordship's absence.

His lordship now asked me, in a voice trembling more with agitation than age, or rage, what I meant?

"Simply, what I have stated."

"Merciful powers! what do you say? what do you mean? what do you hint at? what do you think? what are you doing?" If his lordship's want of breath had not given a momentary check to his volubility and proved a kind of turnpike in his rapid course, and if I had not caught the critical opportunity to say—

"Nothing—your fair friend must do for us both"

—I have little doubt that the little marquis must and would have fallen a victim to exhaustion: but thus, having happily had a moment to recover himself, he proceeded,

"Nay, nay, nay," and laying his white hand, rings and all, on my shoulder, in much tribulation and hurry of speech and manner, "Nay—think of what you are saying—think how you may be injuring that lovely sweet being—that sweetest unsophisticated! lovely! sweet!"

"Oh, what a bed of sweets, yours must be!" interrupted I.

"I know well enough," continued Wellesley, pacing up and down the room with a feverish rapidity. "I know she went to Vauxhall with Beauclerc; but then she told me there was nothing in all this."

"Poor Beauclerc!" ejaculated I; "and what can his lordship do better than attend so sweet a creature? Come, come," I continued, "my lord! Mrs. Raffles is rich, and can do without you, kindly assisted as she is by the little parson!—Don't fret for her, nor for yourself; but, if you still love her, receive her from the hands of the good clergyman."

"Impossible!" Wellesley exclaimed. "I must reproach her with her faults, and then—she will throw the plates and dishes in my face!"

"No! Would she be so vulgar?"

"It is not vulgarity in her," said Wellesley.

"What then?"

"Nature," was his reply.

"Well then, since it is natural to break your head, which fact I do not in the least dispute, may it not be as natural to adorn it occasionally? and may it not be her nature to intrigue with Fred Beauclerc? Do not think about it my lord. Make yourself happy and comfortable, and——"

Wellesley took up his hat and ran downstairs. I followed him, laughing loudly till he got into his carriage.

Beauclerc was in due time tired of his *bonne for-*

tune, and this gave Wellesley the delicious opportunity of pressing his charmer to his faithful and doting heart with renovated rapture.

La Belle Nature!

About this time, or else some other time, a Mr. Something-doff was presented to me, hot from Russia. I forgot the beginning of his name. I recollect that he brought, at the ends of his fingers, a very odd waltz, which seemed to have been composed on purpose to warm them. I asked him, since he was on the Emperor's staff, if he had met with the General Beckendorff.

"Oh, yes!" answered he, laughing, "Beckendorff is my particular friend. He wanted to come to England with me; but he assured me he had made such a fool of himself about a woman here, Amy, I think, he called her, that he was ashamed to show his face within a thousand miles of herself or her friends."

And now my gentle readers: by-the-by, I have no idea why they are so denominated; or why authors, and good ones too, even Lady Morgan at the beginning, she is too great a swell now—I only make use of that elegant expression in humble imitation of Lord Clanricarde—once prosed a great deal about her gratitude for the kind encouragement and indulgence of the public; why in the name of common sense will authors be so very palpably false in what they profess?

Does not Lady Morgan know as well as I do, that the public never yet read one line out of charity towards her or any author breathing since the world began, nor does the kind public ever prize anything which bores them: so that, if the kind public were to cry up my book from morning till night, and suffer me to make my fortune by it, I should feel no more obliged to them than if my volumes kept their station on the shelves of Mr. Stockdale's spacious library, as regularly in a row as the apothecary's gallipots in the Honey Moon; but just the contrary.

If I have the knack to amuse the public, I shall expect the public to be extremely grateful to me, and I desire that they sing my praise in prose and also in better rhymes than mine, to the end of their natural life! True, Doctor Johnson and many other good men, declare that merit is due to such authors as do their best, even when they fail; but what is the use of its being due since nobody pays! What is an author, or anybody else the better for having a parcel of bad debts on his ledger? The good Doctor seems really to be giving Lady Morgan, as well as poor Harriette, a rap on the knuckles, when he says, "No vanity can more justly incur contempt and indignation, than that which boasts of negligence and hurry." For who can bear with patience, the writer who claims such superiority to the rest of his species as to imagine mankind are at leisure for attention to his extemporary sallies. Now, for my part, I do not expect any persons to exercise their patience in bearing with me, being as morally certain as I am of my existence, that these, my temporory sallies, like other people's studied stupidity, will be equally unentertaining, without more regard or respect for the one than the other. In short, whatever contempt my vanity may incur in writing these few sketches thus easily, and without tormenting myself with quotations and deep cogitations, I shall beg to lay all the blame entirely on Stockdale, especially as he has just handed me a quotation from Cumberland, as he styles it, though I am not without suspicion that he had a hand in it himself.

As for our readers, on whom we never fail to bestow the terms of "candid," "gentle," "courteous," and others of the like soothing cast, they certainly deserve all the fair words we can give them; for it is not to be denied, but that we make occasionally very great demands upon their candour, gentleness, and courtesy, exercising them frequently and fully with such trials as require those several endowments in no small proportion.

But are there not also fastidious, angry, querulential readers? Readers with full stomachs, who complain of being surfeited and overloaded with the story-telling trash of our circulating libraries? It cannot be altogether denied: but still they are readers; if the load is so heavy upon them as they pretend it is, I will put them in the way of getting rid of it by reviving the law of the ancient Cecerteans, who obliged their artists to hawk about their several wares, carrying them on their backs till they found purchasers to ease them of the burden. Was this law put in force against authors few of us, I doubt, would be found able to stand under the weight of our own unpurchased works.

Now, gentle readers, after this long digression, you shall hear of the shocking seduction of the present Viscountess Berwick by Viscount Deerhurst!

"She is off! Sophia is off! run away nobody knows where," was the cry of all my sisters one fine morning.

"When, how, where?" said I.

"Last night," answered Fanny, "she was missing. Her father has been to call on Lord Deerhurst: answer, 'nobody in town.' My mother is coming to consult with you."

I waited for no more; but sat down to address Lord Deerhurst, begging him to consider the risk he ran in detaining such a child. I asserted the determination of my father to put in force the utmost rigour of the law; and I implored him, if he was not really dead to shame and all the best feelings of a man, to repair his fault, by bringing Sophia back to me immediately.

That prince of hypocrites, having forcibly obtained all he wished, and in hopes that this would be the cheapest way of getting rid of the business, made a great merit of bringing her back to my house, being, as he said, touched even to tears by my letter, and the monster began to blubber and declared that nothing wrong had occurred, he having passed the night with Sophia in mere conversation.

The poor child looked dreadfully frightened. It is indeed my firm belief that she went away with Lord Deerhurst, being innocent as an infant as to the nature of seduction and its consequence. All she was blameable for was her obstinate boldness in persisting, while so very young, and with that very innocent face of hers, in keeping up a sly intercourse with a man like Lord Deerhurst, and throwing herself under his protection, at an age when girls less shy-looking had been afraid to have listened or spoken to any man, unsanctioned by the presence of their mother or sister.

Sophia was a child, and not a very clever one; but she went away willingly and immediately after both her mother and myself had represented the striking profligacy and disgusting meanness of Lord Deerhurst, in passing off trumpery chains and rings for valuable jewellery. The child who could forsake her parents for such a man as Deerhurst, in spite of every caution, must have been either very vicious or the greatest simpleton on earth.

The poor foolish girl was now kept out of every one's sight, and applications were made to Deerhurst for a provision for her, with a threat of law proceedings in case of refusal.

It seems that the only legal plea for obtaining a provision for a girl thus unfortunately situated is that of the parents having lost her domestic services. Deerhurst after some months at the last said that, if Sophia remained with him, he would settle three hundred pounds a-year on her, as long as no proof of inconstancy to him should be established against her; but, on such an event taking place, the annuity was to be reduced to an allowance of one hundred a-year.

I saw that Sophia was growing idle, and much more likely to get into worse scrapes than to reform: therefore, having tried the generosity and honour of men myself, I advised her to secure the annuity at any rate. Deerhurst employed a —— of a

lawyer to draw up a settlement, according to the above plan, and in about ten months after his lordship first seduced Sophia, he hired a very miserable lodging for her, consisting of two small dark parlours near Grosvenor-place; but then, to make her amends, he sent her in six bottles of red currant-wine, declaring to her that such wine was much more conducive to health than any foreign wine could possibly be. Here we must leave her for a short time, while I return to my own house to learn of Will Halliday who had called on me in my absence. These were a gentleman who would not leave his name and a tradesman of the name of Smith :—both were to return in the evening.

"Very well," I said, "let Smith come upstairs; but be sure to send away the man who is ashamed of his name."

After dinner Will told me that the strange gentleman begged to be allowed to speak to my *femme-de-chambre*, Mrs. Kennedy.

I desired Kennedy to attend him.

She returned to say that the gentleman sent me word, in confidence, that he was Lord Scarborough, who had been so long and so very desirous to make my acquaintance—and regretted the impossibility of getting presented, since he was not a single man.

"Go, and tell him," I answered, "that the thing is quite impossible, more men being regularly introduced to me by others, and of the first respectability, than I liked."

He entreated Kennedy to come up to me again. She declared that she could not take such a liberty with me. Lord Scarborough having, as she afterwards confessed, softened her heart by a five-pound note, induced her to carry me up his watch with his arms on the seal, that I might be certain who he was.

I was in a great passion with Kennedy, and down she went declaring she had lost her place.

I rang the bell, it having just struck me, that the man ought to pay for putting me in a passion, and

giving us all this trouble; therefore, "Tell him," I said, when Kennedy returned, "that a fifty-pound note will do as a regular introduction and, if he leaves it to-night, I will receive him to-morrow at ten."

He hesitated—wished he could only just speak to me, and give me the draft himself.

"Do as you like," Kennedy replied. "Miss Wilson is not at all anxious for you or your fifty pounds; but she has company and will not be disturbed to-night."

"Well," said my lord, "I think you look like an honest, good sort of woman, who will not deceive me."

"Never," said Kennedy, with earnestness, and he wrote a draft for me for fifty pounds, begging she would herself be at hand to let him in when he should arrive, the next night. "I will be very punctual," continued his lordship.

"So will I too," repeated Kennedy; "I will wait for you in the passage:" and with this they took leave; and I immediately rang my bell for Will Halliday.

"William," said I, "that gentleman will be here at ten to-morrow, and he will probably again ask for Kennedy. Can you look quite serious and declare to him you never heard of such a person?"

"As grave as I do now, ma'am."

"Very well, that is quite enough; but he will no doubt proceed to ask for me by my name. Can you still be serious, while declaring that you have no mistress, and that your master is you know well acquainted both with his lordship and his lady wife?'

"Most certainly, ma'am," said Will, as seriously as though he had been at vespers, "I will just clap your directions down in my pocket-book, so you need not be afraid of me, ma'am; because you see, as I told you before, I'm the most particlerst man as is."

"But suppose he insists, William?"

"Oh, ma'am! I'll tell him I've got my knives to clean, and shut the door very gently in his face."

"Thank you, William, I shall feel obliged to you."

Smith, the haberdasher of Oxford-street, was the next person announced to me, and he followed William into the drawing-room. He is a short, thick-built man, with little twinkling eyes, expressive of eager curiosity, and a bald head. This man had known me when I was quite an infant, having served my mother I believe before I was born, and often talked and played with us all while children. As I grew up, his extreme vulgarity, and the amorous twinkle of his little eyes, furnished me with so much real sport and amusement, that, in gratitude for his being so very ridiculous, I had by degrees lost sight of all my usual reserve towards these sort of people: and once, when I was about eleven years of age, this man caught me in the very act of mimicking his amorous leers at our maidservant. I was close behind him and he saw me in the looking-glass.

"Oh you rogue!" said Smith, and from that day good-bye all serious reserve between Smith and me. I would have cut him, only nobody sold such good gloves and ribbons. I often took people to his shop to amuse them, while I encouraged Smith to be as ridiculous as possible, by affecting to be rather flattered by his beautiful leering and his soft speeches.

Smith was as deaf as a post, and never spoke without popping his ear against one's mouth, to catch the answer, and saying, "Hay! Hay!" long before one's lips could move to address him.

I guessed at the motive for his visiting me on this occasion, for I knew that two of my promissory notes of hand for fifty pounds each had been returned to him on that morning, as they had also been three months before, when I made him renew them. Not that I was in any sort of difficulty during the whole period I remained with Lord Ponsonby, who always took care of me and for me; but Smith's scolding furnished me with so much entertainment, that I purposely neglected his bills, knowing his high charges and how well he could afford to give long

credit. He came into the room, with a firmer step than usual and his bow was more stately.

"Your sarvant, Miss."

"Smith," said I, "those bills were paid to-day, I hope?"

Smith shook his head. "Too bad, too bad, Miss, upon my word!"

I laughed.

"You are a pretty creature!" said Smith, drawing in his breath, his amorous feelings for an instant driving the bills out of his head, and then added hastily, with an altered expression of countenance, "But you really must pay your bills!"

"You don't say so?"

"If," continued Smith earnestly; "if you had but ha' let me ha knode, you see; but, in this way, you hurt my credit in the City."

"What signifies having credit, in such a vulgar place as that?"

"You talk like a child," exclaimed Smith impatiently.

"Come," said I to Smith, "hand out your stamps."

"And Miss, do you expect me to find you in stamps too?"

I laughed.

"But," continued Smith, growing enthusiastic all at once," you look so beautiful and charming in your little blue satin dress. You bought that satin of me I think? Ah, yes, I remember—you do look so pretty, and so tempting, and so, so—oh Lord."

"Mr. Smith, I really will speak to Mrs. Smith, if you will go into these sort of raptures."

"Beg you pardon, beg your pardon! Have got a curious little article here to show you" (pulling something from his breeches pocket, which proved to be some embroidered, covered buttons). "Beg your pardon, but, bless you! You are so well made you see, about here"—touching his own breast. "There is never a one of your sisters like you, about here. I always said it. Hay? hay? I was a saying so, you

see, to my young man yesterday when you came into the shop. Now, there's Miss Sophy, pretty creature too! very, but, Oh, Lord! you beat them all, just about here."

"Mr. Smith, I really must send a note to your wife to-morrow."

"Oh, no! I am sure you wont. You would not be so hard-hearted." He then proceeded, in a whisper, "The fact is, there's never a man in England as don't have a bit of frolic; only they doesn't know it you see. Pretty hair!——"

"Mr. Smith, if you meddle with my hair, I shall seriously be angry, and ring for my servant."

"Beg pardon.—Thousands of pardons—It's the worst of me, I'm so imperdent, you see!—can't help it—been so from child—never could keep my hands off a fine woman! and Mrs. Smith is confined, you see: that's one thing! Hay? Hay? but it shan't happen again. Now about those here bills? If I draw you up two more, now, will you really give me your word they shall be paid?"

"No," answered I.

"You wont?"

"No!"

"Then I'll tell you what, Miss! I can't say as you treat me exactly like a lady, and—now don't laugh—oh, you sly, pretty rogue!—Hay? Hay? Beg pardon—it's my own fault, you see. So very imperdent! Come, I'll draw up these here bills."

He began writing, and I laughed at him again. He shook his head at me. "Sad doings, Miss, these here bills being returned."

"It's the worst of me," said I, mimicking his manner. "It's the worst of me, that I never do pay my bills. Have been so from a child!"

Lord Ponsonby's well-known rap at the door occasioned Smith to be bundled into the street, bills and all, without the slightest ceremony.

I have, I believe, already said that I would not dwell much on that period of my life, which I passed

so happily with Lord Ponsonby and which lasted, I think, three years. Lord Rivers used to say to me, "Your little light feet seem scarcely to touch the earth, as though you could almost fly!"

Happiness is a stupid subject to write upon, therefore I will revert to that of the present Lady Berwick, whom I often visited after she took possession of the poor humble lodging which Deerhurst's parsimony had provided for her. First, however, the respect I feel for the memory of a most tender parent, makes me anxious that she should be acquitted from every shadow of blame which might, by some perhaps, be imputed to her, in consequence of her daughters errors and the life they fell into.

My mother was a natural daughter of a country gentleman, of great respectability and good estate, Mr. Cheney. His only son, General Cheney, was an old guardsman, and died some few years ago. The late Lady Frederick Campbell, aunt of his grace the Duke of Argyle, was so struck with the beauty of my mother as to adopt her and bring her up as her own child. After her marriage, her ladyship still continued her friendship and, indeed, almost up to the time of the very lamented death of that amiable lady.

I remember the ceremony of our being all dressed up in our best frocks to go out of town and pass the day with her ladyship, who was kind enough to stand godmother to my eldest sister. My mother was the most beautiful woman, and possessed the finest and most benevolent countenance, I have ever seen in my whole life. Her education had been carefully attended to by Lady Frederick, and she possessed a most excellent understanding: but, marrying so very young a man more than twenty years her senior, and being remarkably meek and gentle, she acquired such a habit of blind submission to his will, that at home she was more like our sister than our parent. She was powerless to contribute either to our good or our comfort in any one thing which did not suit my father's humour. Having no fortune to bestow on

us, she gave us the best education in her power; and, what ought to have done us still more good, she ever set us the very best example; for she was not only virtuous, but patient, industrious, and invariably amiable in her temper. She was the mother of fifteen children, when she died lamented and respected by every one who knew her.

Our home was truly uncomfortable; but my dearest mother ever made it the study of her life to contribute to the ease and welfare of her family.

This, as I have said before, is not a complete confession; but nothing is stated of consequence to any individual which is not strictly true.

When I called on Sophia I generally found two or three beaux talking nonsense to her. Among them, Henry De Roos was the most favoured. Sophia appeared to dislike Lord Deerhurst of all things, and complained that he was unusually sparing of soap and water at his toilette.

"He dresses completely," said Sophia, "before he touches water; and, being equipped, he wets a very dirty hair-brush and draws it over his head; and this is what he calls washing it—and then, having thus washed his hands and face, he says that he feels fresh and comfortable."

One day Deerhurst insisted on my accompanying him and Sophia in his curricle, to go out of town somewhere to dinner.

"Three in a curricle?" said Sophia.

"Oh, it is no matter at this time of the year;" Deerhurst replied.

I inquired where we should dine.

Deerhurst named some small place about eight miles from town, but I have forgotten what he called it. He took us to a common village pot-house, where nothing could be put on the table besides fried eggs and bacon.

"Most excellent!" exclaimed Deerhurst, "an exquisite dish—and so very rural!"

Our rural dinner was soon despatched; and, as I

could not endure the strong smell of tobacco, which issued in copious fumes from the tap-room, I proposed returning to town as fast as possible.

Sophia, who always agreed with everybody, was asked first by Deerhurst if eggs and bacon were not a delightful dish.

She answered, "Very much so indeed."

I then asked her if it were not enough to make us sick on such a hot day.

To which her reply was, "I am quite sick already."

In coming home, Deerhurst put his horses all at once into a full gallop as we drew near the turnpike, bent on the noble triumph of cheating—I will not use the technical word—the man of twopence! The lord of the gate, in a fury ran after Deerhurst and with some difficulty contrived to catch hold of his whip.

"Let go my whip!" vociferated Deerhurst.

"You sneaking b—kg—d!" said the man, still holding fast by one end of the whip, "this is not the first time you have attempted to cheat me."

"Let go my whip, and be d—d to you!" bawled Deerhurst.

The man however refused and in the struggle it was broken.

"Now d—n your soul," said Deerhurst, darting from the curricle without the least regard to our fears, and leaving us to manage two spirited horses how we could. In an instant he had stripped off his coat and was hard at it with the fat, dirty turnpike-man.

"Oh!" ejaculated I, in despair, "that ever I should have ventured out in such disgusting society!"

"Very disgusting indeed," echoed Sophia.

Once Deerhurst was down; but we soon discovered that the fat turnpike-man was undermost, and, "Go it, my lord! you a lord? a rum lord!" burst from a Babel-like confused world of voices.

The Honourable Arthur Upton happened to be passing at this moment. I called out to him by his name, and he came up to the curricle. I told him

that we were frightened almost to death at the scene which presented itself, and our peculiar situation, having no proper dresses nor shoes for walking, and requested that he would make somebody stand at the heads of the horses.

He did so, and afterwards obligingly made his way to Lord Deerhurst. He begged his lordship would excuse the liberty he took, adding, "We know each other personally Lord Deerhurst, and I cannot help feeling hurt and grieved to see you so engaged, particularly with two young ladies under your immediate protection. I feel myself bound, seeing so many blackguards against you, to stand by you, as long as you choose to keep me in this very disgraceful situation."

"What," cried out the many-mouthed mob, "you are another lord, I suppose? Here's rum lords for you! cheating a poor man out of twopence, and then stopping to fight in the road. My sarvices to you, my lord! Who would not be a lord!"

"Out of respect for you, Mr. Upton," said Deerhurst, "I will pay this fellow;" and thus, after knocking the poor man about till he was black and blue, his lordship being possessed of all such skill as his friends Crib and Jackson had taught him, he paid him the twopence which was originally his due, and was hissed and hooted till he drove out of sight.

When he rejoined us, his nose and fingers were covered with blood.

"Did you ever see such an impudent rascal, my dear Sophia?" said Deerhurst to her.

"Never in my life," prettily repeated Sophia in her own cuckoo-strain.

CHAPTER IX

By this time, my most gentle readers are growing, *tant soi peu*, tired of—what they presume to call—my consummate nonsense! and an indulgent public is, I must however say, somewhat prematurely thinking about throwing aside my very charming narrative of facts in high life as they actually took place; though I do not specify in what year or years, being anxious to forget all such critical matters as dates.

To such of the kind public as may have a perverted taste for the serious, I beg leave to state that I am now making my *début* in a tragic part; but venture humbly to express the hope that my tragical adventures will furnish more interest to my readers than they supplied amusement to me.

I have twice before stated that Lord Ponsonby's attachment to me continued, or appeared to continue, unabated for the space of nearly three years: *et, savez-vous, mes belles dames, que cela est beaucoup?* Towards the end of that period, he one evening appeared to me unusually melancholy. I had frequently reproached him with making a mystery to me of something which must have happened to him; but he not only assured me that I was mistaken, but began to affect more than his accustomed gaiety; and he acted his part so well that I was doubtful whether I had not been altogether deceived.

"Then perhaps you are only out of health," said I, "instead of out of spirits? for I am sure that your hands are feverish."

"Now you have discovered it," said Ponsonby,

laughing; "I am going to die!—Would you regret me?" said he: and then, in a tone of much feeling, added, as he put back my thick hair with his two hands, to kiss my forehead and examine the expression of my countenance, intensely, as though he were taking a last farewell of it—"I will not ask you; for I am sure you would."

He now took up some paper and began to write, holding his hand before the paper to prevent my seeing a single line.

"What are you writing?" I asked.

"Private business," was Ponsonby's answer.

On this I sat down to my pianoforte, that I might not interrupt him. Yet it struck me that it must be something for me, or that he would not have written it at my house.

Lord Ponsonby had often hinted that he wished to make a provision for me, during my life, of two hundred pounds a year. I imagined that this might be something of a promise to that effect:—but, as I knew Ponsonby at that time to be very poor and much in debt, my resolution was taken at once. "He will divide his purse with me," thought I, "while he lives and loves me—and I will never look forward, nor provide for one hour after Ponsonby shall be lost to me."

As soon as he had sealed up a letter, which he put into his pocket, he looked at his watch and, starting upon his feet, said, in a voice of real distress, "I must go!—Who would have imagined that it could be so late!"

"Must you go home, already?" I asked

"Not home, but to the House of Lords," Ponsonby replied. "But, my dear Harriette, I cannot lose you at this moment! Perhaps you were right, and my spirits may have been rather lower than usual to-night! Will you come down with me in a hackney coach as far as the House?"

I acquiesced willingly; and when we arrived there I begged to be allowed to wait for him. "I do not

care if it should be all night," said I; "for you'll come at last, and we can drive towards your house together."

Ponsonby answered that I was very good; but in the greatest despondency.

In half an hour he came to the coach-door, to say that the House would sit late and he could not bear the idea of my waiting.

"All these things, my dearest Ponsonby," said I, "are mere matters of taste. I am very happy in waiting for you—very!" He did not again return to me for more than three hours. It was daylight. He seemed to be dreadfully unwell and fatigued. I had never seen him thus since the death of his father. He gave me, I think, almost a hundred kisses, without uttering a single word.

"You are much fatigued, dear Ponsonby," said I; "I only wish to heaven I might stay with you and take care of you for ever."

"I have a letter for you," said Ponsonby, drawing the one which he had written at my house from his pocket, as we drove towards his own home.

"You must excuse my taking it," said I; "because, I will tell you frankly, I rather guess that it is to secure me the provision which you have so often talked about"

He was peremptory.

"I am no liar, Ponsonby," said I, "and, when I most solemnly declare to you that I will never accept of any annuity from you, unless you were to become so rich as to make one without the slightest inconvenience to yourself or your family—I hope you will believe me." I then tore the letter into many pieces and threw it out of the coach-window.

Ponsonby seemed almost ashamed of having had so little as two hundred pounds a year to offer; but even that was not without difficulty, for he was most magnificent in his ideas of gentlemanly expenditure.

Poor fellow! He had so little of it to spend: and

from delicacy he was afraid to say more on the subject of what he considered a trifle wholly unworthy of me.

As he drew near his door, Ponsonby pressed me close to his heart. "My dear Harriette," said he, "it is indeed as you say, very hard upon us that we may not pass the whole of our lives together; but then be assured of this truth; and I hope that it may afford you consolation, happen what will, my affection for you, to whom I certainly owe some of the happiest hours I have ever known."

The kiss which followed this declaration was as long and as ardent as our first! Yet alas! how different the parting kiss of unfathomable anguish, given in the fervour of gaunt despair, to the first soul-thrilling embrace of wild, ardent ecstasy, which comprehends no limits and which, like the last, could never be forgotten by me.

Ponsonby had affected me with his more than usual melancholy, and, when I was about to take my leave, I felt that I could not speak; but I kissed his hand eagerly and fervently, as he was hurrying out of the coach. . . .

I have never seen him from that hour.

On the following evening, while I was expecting Ponsonby, I received a letter from him, the purport of which was to inform me that we had parted for ever.

I remember little of the style or nature of the letter. Something I read about a discovery made by Lady Ponsonby, and a solemn engagement or promise extorted from him, to see me only once more, in which interview he had intended to have explained and arranged everything; but could not. The perusal of this letter occasioned a mist to come over my eyes, my heart seemed to swell so as almost to produce suffocation: and yet I did not believe it to be possible that we could have parted for the last time, or surely

my anguish had burst forth in one wild cry and then all had been still for ever!

But hope was not yet extinct. I felt stunned, more by the sudden shock of such an idea being presented to my imagination as possible, than from any conviction of its probability. "Dreadful!" thought I, and shuddered, while I felt a cold dew as from the charnel-house overspread my whole frame, "shall Ponsonby refuse to speak to me, and even look upon me as a stranger, after all our communion of feeling, after all that deep interest which he evinced towards me so late as this very morning? Nonsense! palpable, gross absurdity! How I have been frightening myself! As if it were in human nature to be so cruel even to one's greatest enemy! And Ponsonby's nature is so kind!" and then a violent hysterical affection steeped my senses in forgetfulness and relieved for an instant the bitter anguish of my heart. Then I suddenly recollected his parting kiss. Gracious God! could he have left me? My brain seemed absolutely on fire. I flew to the window, where for years I had been in the habit of watching his approach. "It is not high enough," thought I, "and would but half destroy me. I will go to him first," and my trembling hands essayed in vain to fasten the ribbons of my bonnet under my chin: "but no, no, I will not risk her happiness. I am not really wicked, not so very wicked as to deserve this dreadful calamity. We are sent into the world to endure the evils of it patiently, and not thus to fly into the face of our God. If he is our father, and I kneel down to him with patience, this anguish will be calmed."

I locked my door, and then prostrated myself with my face on the floor and prayed fervently for near an hour that, if I was to see Ponsonby no more, God would take me in mercy out of a world of such bitter suffering before the morning. I arose somewhat comforted: but stiff, and so cold that my whole frame trembled violently. I swallowed some lavender-drops and tried to write: blotted twenty sheets of

paper with unintelligible nonsense and wetted them with my tears.

The book Ponsonby last read to me now caught my eye. No sense of religion could calm me or save me from the actions of despair, while these objects were before me, and, hastily wrapping my cloak about me, I hurried into the streets. I walked on with incredible swiftness till my strength failed me all at once, and, panting for breath, I sat down on the step of a door in Half Moon-street. The night was dark and rainy. "I have a strong mind," thought I, "and I will exert it to consider where I shall look for help and consolation if Ponsonby has left me." As this thought struck me, the slow tear fell unregarded down my cheek. "Death," was the answer my despair made me, "only death can relieve me!" But then what is death? how soon the vital spark of life is destroyed in insects. The poor moth, when writhing in torture of its own seeking, how often and how easily I have put at rest! Ponsonby's neglect, Ponsonby's late passion, his smile, and his last long kiss, cannot torture me after this little palpitation has ceased, and I held my fingers to my throat to ascertain the strength of what seemed all of life about me. Yet I will suffer first, and suffer long, that I may pray for God's forgiveness, only be it my consolation that this will terminate all.

Alas! vain was my reasoning. There was no consolation for me. I was bent on writing to Ponsonby. "I will return home," thought I, "and shut myself up in the small room he has never entered." My trembling knees could no longer support me. I tried to rise; but could not. My lips were parched, my cheeks burned, and I was very sick. "God is about to grant the prayer I have made to him," thought I,—ever sanguine in what I wished—"I shall die by his own will."

I grew worse, and very faint. Sickness was new to me at that time, and now a slight touch of fear came over me. "Alas!" methought, "I am going out of the

world very young and very miserably, and before I have written to Ponsonby. He would have returned to me. He loved me, and while there was life there was hope. I might have been so exquisitely happy as to have been pressed to his heart again! though but once more, it would have compensated an age of misery. It is but in losing him I can appreciate my late wonderful happiness. I would have been his servant or his slave, and lived on one of his smiles for a week, as a reward for the hardest labour. What am I? what was I, that Ponsonby should devote his precious life to me? No matter what I was!" As I grew still fainter, I prayed for Ponsonby's eternal happiness, as though I had felt he required my prayers.

"Vy do you set there?" inquired a man, who was passing, in the accent of a Jew, and, receiving no answer, after examining me attentively, he added, "Poor ting! poor girl you are ill! don't be afraid of a poor old Jew. Tell me vat I sal do for you." My heart was so deeply oppressed that my strongest effort to subdue my feelings proved unsuccessful; and, at the sound of these few words uttered in a tone of unaffected benevolence, I sobbed aloud.

"Poor ting! poor young ting! Got bless my soul," taking my hand, "you are very ill, you have much fever, vat shall pe done!"

"I am really ill," said I, struggling to speak calmly, "and you will oblige me greatly if you will have the kindness to see me to a hackney coach."

The Jew hastened to comply with my request, and with real delicacy assisted me into the carriage he procured for me, without making a single inquiry.

Arrived at home, my housekeeper was so alarmed and struck at my altered appearance that she, after putting me to bed, sent for Dr. Bain, who assured me that I was in a high fever, and that my recovery depended entirely on my keeping myself very quiet.

I confessed to my physician that there was something on my mind which agitated me so violently

that I could find no rest till I was allowed to write a long letter. He seemed to take a strong interest in my fate; and, after vainly imploring me not to attempt it, suffered my maid to place my writing-desk before me; but, alas! I could not write.

My memory began to fail me, and my head was dreadfully confused, I remarked this to Dr. Bain as I laid down my pen.

"My dear child," said the doctor, taking my burning hand with much kindness, "your pulse is so high at this moment, that nothing but the most perfect stillness can ever restore you. Only obey my instructions for three days, and I firmly hope that your fever will have left you, and you will be able to write without difficulty on any subject you please."

The idea of dying without having addressed Ponsonby, caused me such extreme anguish, that I submitted like an infant to follow the advice I received.

"Only assure me, sir," said I, "that I shall be able to write to a particular friend, a very long, collected letter before I die—and my mind will become comparatively calm."

The doctor gave me all the comfort in his power, and promised to see me early in the morning.

I passed a very agitated night, I could not refrain from puzzling my poor, confused brain as to what I should write to Ponsonby. My letter was to decide my fate on earth, therefore must not be hurried, nor begun till I had collected all the energies of my mind. I prayed that such eloquence might be granted me as might persuade and lead Ponsonby, at least to show some symptoms of humanity towards me.

It was six o'clock in the morning before the strong opiate which Dr. Bain had prescribed for me produced any effect. At that hour, quite exhausted in mind and body, I fell into a heavy sleep, which lasted more than eight hours.

On opening my eyes, I saw at my bedside my dear sister Fanny and Dr. Bain: the latter was feeling

my pulse. I felt very much agitated at seeing Fanny.

Dr. Bain told her that my disorder proceeded alone from the agitation of my mind; but it, nevertheless, had produced such violent effects as to make it advisable for me immediately to lose some blood.

I submitted to whatever was required of me; but I begged Fanny not to tease or question me as to what had caused all this, assuring her that I could not talk on the subject without disturbing my senses, and I was earnestly desirous of obtaining a little calm reason, if only for one hour more, that I might compose a letter before I died.

Dr. Bain, as well as my sister, said and did everything the most tender friendship could dictate. To be brief, their kind attention and my own excellent constitution triumphed over the fever, which had been very severe during five days. In a little more than a fortnight I left my bed; and, though reduced to a mere shadow of what I had been, I found myself sufficiently collected to address the following letter to Lord Ponsonby:

"Scarcely a month has elapsed since I possessed, or believed I possessed, with health, reputed beauty, and such natural spirits, 'as were wont to set the table in a roar,' all my highest flights of imagination had ever conceived or dreamed of perfect happiness on earth—I had almost said, in heaven! Alas! I had not considered how unreal and fleeting must ever be the glories of this life, and I was, as a child, unprepared for the heavy affliction which has fallen on my heart like a thunder-bolt, withering all healthful verdure and crushing its hopes for ever.

"In encouraging so deep an attachment for a married man I have indeed been very hardened; but, till now, I can call my God to witness, I have never in my life reflected seriously on any subject. Maturity of thought, it should seem, is acquired earlier by certain characters than others; for I could affirm on my

death-bed that, hitherto, I dreamed not of injuring any one of my fellow creatures. In short, while I loved all the world and would fain have done them all good, I most respected Lady Ponsonby. This assertion may seem scarcely credible to young females, differently educated or of less wild and childish dispositions; but, just arisen from a sick bed, I write not to deceive.

"Three weeks of bitter anguish of mind and body have changed, or rather matured my nature so completely, that even the expression of my features bears another character.

"My eyes are now open and I feel that, as the mistress of a married man, possessing an innocent, amiable young wife, I could no longer be esteemed or respected by the only being whose respect was dear to me. As lovers then, Ponsonby, we have met for the last time on earth!" [Here I laid down my pen; because this idea affected me.]

"I have delayed writing to you, till I could address you with reasonable firmness, not with the mere ravings of passion. Think you so meanly of me, dear Ponsonby, as to fancy that I could be gratified at becoming a mere instrument of pleasure to you, after my cool judgment has told me that I should thus forfeit all right to your respect or esteem? You are a man of the world, and as such may confound what is termed a lovefit, with the deep affection you have for three years taken pains to inspire in my heart.

"'Love never kills,' says the unfeeling world: yet, unfeeling as it may be, such a sudden desertion of your wife would have called forth towards her its deepest commiseration. Alas! the ceremony of marriage, read over to me by a thousand priests, could not have added one jot to my despair, while I in vain cast my cheerless eyes around the wide world for a single ray of pity, which is ever denied me.

"Yet the faults of my careless youth have been sanctioned and encouraged and shared by you, who knew well, from experience, the future anguish you

were preparing for me! You elated my pride beyond all the bounds of humility: you blessed me with more than human happiness, but to destroy my peace for ever! I was not naturally vain; but, when you have shut yourself up whole days alone, to think on our meeting and our love, till we should meet again,—when, in movements of the wildest passion, you, with all your talent and your glorious beauty, have called me your own angelic Harriette, think you I could divest myself of delicious pride in the object of my passion? And if I did not believe or fancy myself an angel, perhaps my attributes as a woman were but the more appreciated by me, as you preferred them.

"Enough of a subject I had determined not to touch upon. I bow with humility to the fate which compels me to resign such happiness as few, among wiser and better people, have been permitted to enjoy; and, 'come what may, I have been blessed.'

"Had it pleased heaven to have bestowed on me the husband of my choice, there is nothing great or good or virtuous that I had not aspired to: as it is, I am a poor fallen wretch, who ask of your compassion one line or one word of consolation to save me from despair.

"Oh! I have known such moments of deep anguish as I could never describe to you. Ponsonby, my dear Ponsonby! I throw myself on my knees before you, I raise the eyes you have so often professed to love and admire, now disfigured, and half closed by constant weeping, towards heaven, and I ask of God to soften your heart, that you may not torture me beyond my strength. Recall then those dreadful words,—'we must part now, Harriette, and for ever!' I too am a woman! and Lady Ponsonby desires not my death.

"Trust me, the errors and little weaknesses which humanity dictates shall be found more acceptable in the eyes of God, than such stoical virtue as results from hardness of heart.

"If I survive the punishment you have declared I must submit to, it will be by the strength of my constitution, which shall be proof against an age of anguish! My heart was ever warm and unusually affectionate. I ask but to live yet for you, not with you. I would but obtain your approbation as a reward for my earnest endeavours to do right, and obtain for myself an existence, by my own industry, if ever my former health and strength should be restored to me.

"When you come and speak to me of what is right and virtuous shall I not love virtue for your sake? Have I ever wished to disobey you? I do not ask you to visit me alone. Call on me with Lord Jersey. Come soon, and give but the assurance that still and for ever you will be all to me that honour and virtue permits; that once in every year, while I act virtuously, you will visit me, and encourage me with your friendship and approbation.

"I am overpowered with faintness and fatigue, else I had many, many more arguments to urge. Hope, almost life, hangs on your answer; therefore, dear Ponsonby be merciful, and so may God bless you.

"HARRIETTE."

My mind was very much relieved, after I had despatched my letter; for I considered that I should certainly hear from Lord Ponsonby, if he possessed one spark of feeling toward me; and, if he did not, of course my respect and affection must naturally abate.

I watched for the appearance of the postman, who usually brought my letters, from morning till night, with indescribable emotion; nor did I cease to hope for a whole week. At last however I was convinced that the epistle which had cost me so much labour of thought, was indeed entirely disregarded by the person on whom I expected it would have made a deep impression.

Somewhat of an indignant feeling began to take

the place of affection. All my woman's pride was roused, and yet methought, this man, so cruelly unfeeling to me now, has watched my slumbers in breathless silence, and still he smiles with the same brilliant expression on others, and all about him are impressed with that dignified air of true nobility, that high reserve so delightfully and condescendingly thrown aside, in favour of the few who please him.

A slow intermitting fever began to prey on my constitution. I felt a violent oppression of the chest, which increased so rapidly, in spite of all my kind friend, Dr. Bain, could do for me, that in less than a month after I had addressed my last letter to Ponsonby, I could never find breath sufficient to enable me to ascend the stairs to my bed-chanber, without sitting down to rest more than once. I began to hate society; above all I avoided anything like gaiety.

It was now that I believed in all I had heard as to the wretchedness of this life, and I wanted to reconcile myself to my God. "I will pass my heavy hours in doing the little good to my fellow creatures, in my power," said I one day, as I recollected my former slight acquaintance with a woman whom I knew to have been lately taken to Newgate for rather a heavy debt. She was Lord Craven's housekeeper, during the time I had lived with him at Brighton.

I ordered my carriage to the debtors' door of Newgate. My mind was so deeply absorbed with one object, that the misery I saw there did not much affect me. The poor woman, Mrs. Butler, was surprised and delighted to see me.

"I wish I could pay your debt," said I, panting for breath as usual, and speaking with pain and difficulty.

"My dear, dear young lady," said Mrs. Butler, looking at me with much compassion, "what has happened to that sweet, merry, blooming face of yours?"

It only required a single word, uttered in a tone of sympathy, to bring the ready tears into my eyes. Mine now fell, disregarded by me, down my pale

cheek. "You," returned I, "are not the only person in affliction; but, never mind, talk to me, my good woman, of anything except my unhappiness. I cannot pay your debt, with common justice to my own creditors; but this trifle I can spare, and you are very welcome to it." I then placed in her hand all I at that moment possessed in the world, except a single one pound note.

Mrs. Butler really was what she appeared, very grateful. I sat an hour with her, and promised constantly to visit her and provide for all her little wants, as long as she continued in prison. When I was taking my leave, just as the last bell was about to ring, which was to exclude all strangers for the night, I observed an interesting young girl of about fourteen years of age, in one corner of the room, weeping bitterly; near her sat an elderly lady apparently in much affliction. A working man was in the act of making up a large bundle, out of I knew not what.

"Those poor people are in great affliction," said Mrs. Butler, observing what had fixed my attention. "The mother has seen better days; they have hitherto contrived to pay 3*s.* 6*d.* a week for the hire of their bed, which that man is now taking away, because their means are exhausted. I was instantly about to desire the man to put down the bed, when prudence whispered in my ear that I had just given all I possessed but a single pound note. "No matter," thought I, taking out my purse, "poverty cannot add to such affliction of the mind as mine is." Again I paused. This lady has seen better days and must be treated with more delicacy. I hastened towards her and, taking hold of her hand to place my bank note in it, I whispered in her ear, my request, that she would do me the favour to make use of the trifle, and without waiting her answer I hurried on after the man, who was now disappearing with the poor woman's mattress and bed-clothes, and desired him to return with them.

The next morning I was surprised by a visit from the Duke of Wellington, who had unexpectedly arrived from the continent the night before.

"How do you do? what have you been about?" asked His Grace: then, fixing his eyes on my pale, thin, care-worn face, he absolutely started, as though he had seen the ghost of some man he had killed, honestly of course!

"What the devil is the matter?" inquired Wellington.

"Something has affected me deeply," answered I, my eyes again filling with tears, "and I have been ill for more than two months."

"Poor girl!" said Wellington, as though he really would have pitied me, had he but known how, and then added, "I always dreaded your getting into some scrape. Do you recollect I told you so? How much money do you want?" said this man of sentiment, drawing near the table and taking up my pen to write a draft.

"I have no money," I replied, "not a single shilling; but this is not the cause of my sufferings."

"Nonsense, nonsense," rejoined Wellington, writing me a cheque. "Where the devil is Argyle? Why do not you make him pay your debts? I will give you what I can afford now, and you must write to me, as usual, at Thomas's Hotel, if this is not sufficient. Good God! how thin you are grown? Were you sorry I left you? I remember you shed tears when I told you I was off for Spain. I am a cold sort of fellow. I dare say you think so, and yet, I have not forgotten that either: because there is no humbug about you; and, when you cry, you are sorry I believe. I have thought of you very often in Spain; particularly one night, I remember, I dreamed you came out on my staff."

Wellington consoled me as well as he could, and sat with me nearly three hours. His visit made no impression on me, except that I was grateful for his kindness in leaving me the money I wanted.

The oppression on my chest increased daily, and I became so reduced as to excite the commiseration of a kind opposite neighbour, who sent over her footman to know if the poor young creature she saw from her window, and who appeared so very ill, had proper advice, and friends in town to take care of her?

My grief seemed now to settle in deep despondency. I considered my late intimacy with Ponsonby as unreal mockery, a bright vision of the fancy. I believed that were he suddenly to appear again before me, I should instantly expire. Dr. Bain, I know, believed that my symptoms bordered on a decline and he wished me to try Italy.

In about a week I paid a second visit to Mrs. Butler, although my trembling limbs could scarcely support me up the stairs of the prison; and, when I entered, I was absolutely speechless with the effort for nearly a quarter of an hour. Mrs. Butler was all gratitude; while expressing the concern I believe she felt, lest I should injure myself by venturing out in such a miserable state of health.

Observing in the room several women, who appeared to examine me with perfect curiosity, I asked Mrs. Butler if she knew what it meant.

"Why," said Mrs. Butler, "that woman, whose bed they were taking away from her when you noticed her last week, knows you, and has been malicious enough to tell all the room that you are a mere kept mistress with whom she should be ashamed to converse."

I threw on the stranger to whom I had given my very last pound a hasty and indignant glance; but, neither the expression nor the colour of anger would dwell on a cheek bloodless as mine, and I might apply to myself, what Sterne said of his poor old monk, that nature had done with its resentments.

"I never injured any of those women," reflected I, with meek resignation: "but God will be kinder to me and to my errors than they are!"

I offered all the little comforts in my power to

Mrs. Butler, and then my health obliged me to take my leave. As I passed close to the woman into whose hands I had placed my pound-note, she smiled and curtsied affectedly. I fixed my sunk eyes, for an instant on her face, and then withdrew them, more in sorrow than in anger.

I lingered thus for about two months, without any visible change in my health or spirits, except that I grew weaker and thinner every day. All the kindness which could be administered to a mind diseased I received from my mother and sister Fanny.

About this time the Duke of Argyle arrived from Scotland. He was, no doubt, greatly shocked to see me so ill, although the cause of my melancholy state of mind being known to him, did not either flatter or interest him; more particularly as he had often himself remarked to me, that he wondered any woman alive could resist Lord Ponsonby.

I had always liked Argyle, and was glad to see him, and should have indeed found much consolation in his society, but that he loved to trifle with my distress, as it regarded Lord Ponsonby.

"I have just dined with Ponsonby," said Argyle to me one night, "and I never saw him look better. He showed me a letter, containing an invitation from that nasty sister of yours, Amy, who wanted to have me last year."

That way madness lies: I could not listen to another word. I was rushing past Argyle, when he detained me, frightened at the wildness of my looks.

"It is all a joke you credulous little fool," said he, running after me.

"I cannot run," said I, turning round, and panting for breath. "Pray, pray, leave me now. You torture me by staying. Come this evening, and I shall thank you for your visit." It was long before I could induce him to leave me.

The moment I was alone, I despatched the following note to Lord Ponsonby.

"I thank you that you renounced my prayers; for you thus cured me of half my esteem. It was my fixed determination never to intrude myself again on your attention; but the Duke of Argyle has mentioned to me this morning my sister Amy having written to you. Once more then, Ponsonby, I implore you, as you would save me from self-destruction, satisfy my wretched mind in what cannot injure Lady Ponsonby. Declare to me—nobody has or shall . . . Ponsonby, I am addressing you for the last time. Have mercy on the dreadful agitation of my mind and answer me directly. You are quite happy, Argyle says; and I in the very flower of my age am dying. One line can relieve me perhaps from madness! Your watch, chain and ring are sealed up. I could not look on them. I never shall again. My poor eyes have looked their last on them and you; and I shall never write to you again; therefore, God bless you. When age shall overtake you, in some moment of affliction, perhaps you will remember me and what I could have been to you. Adieu."

I despatched my letter almost without hope. "If he could resist the other," thought I, "this is more stupid, and less likely to affect him."

The agitation Argyle's stay had occasioned produced an increase of fever. Towards night I began to think seriously of dying, and not without reason, being reduced to a mere skeleton, and having now been afflicted with cough and extreme difficulty of respiration for almost five months. There is a restlessness in all disorders of the mind, which the sufferer imagines can be best relieved by exercise. About nine o'clock, having read the New Testament for several hours, I felt a strange desire to behold the outside of Lord Ponsonby's house once again before I died. I had avoided passing within a mile of it since he had left me, and this night I fancied something good would turn up from going there, if I could but find strength to accomplish my design. To have

mentioned it to my housekeeper would have been at once to put it out of the question. I really believe she would have locked me into my room, while she had sent for my sister and Dr. Bain; therefore, getting rid of her and of my footman, I gained a hackney-coach unobserved, and was set down in Park Lane, very near Lord Ponsonby's house. It was a fine mild evening, and the watchman was calling the hour of ten. I was terribly afraid of him, and my breath failed me when I tried to hasten out of his way. I wandered about till I could stand no longer, and, with difficulty, contrived to obtain a seat on the steps of a large portico-door.

The atmosphere now began to threaten rain, which soon fell in torrents. A poor shivering girl sought shelter by my side. She was coughing most dreadfully, and her breath was still more oppressed than my own. "That cough," thought I, "is not feigned, and perhaps this wretched creature is thus nightly exposed to the inclement weather, to obtain existence by the prostitution of her person to unfeeling and drunken strangers: and what am I, that I should turn my back on a sister in affliction?" I immediately inquired of her why she left her home with such a dreadful cough.

The poor creature turned her head towards me in much apparent surprise. She was not beautiful, nor was she rouged, and her dress was rather neat than tawdry. The set characters of death appeared to me to be stamped on features which once had been very lovely.

"I have no home," was the poor girl's answer. "I had half a bed, till last night," added she, "but you see what I suffer, and, therefore, being unable to obtain a single shilling, they have turned me into the streets."

"Dreadful! dreadful!" I ejaculated. "Good God! how could you ever degrade yourself thus? What labour would not have been preferable at the beginning!"

The poor creature interrupted me with loud sobs, which produced such a dreadful fit of coughing, I thought that she would have expired on the spot.

"Good heavens!" said I, "what is to be done? I am so very weak myself, that I cannot help you or seek for a coach to carry us home; but, when the watchman passes us, I will send him for one and take you with me, and have you put into a warm bed and see you taken care of. When I have done this, I do not think you will swear at me, or frighten me, or ill-use me, will you?" added I, taking hold of her hand. "I am sure you would not, you could not, nobody could if they knew but half how wretched I am."

The poor creature fell on her knees before me, and strove in vain to express her gratitude, with wild incoherency. I never saw any one thus affected.

"My poor young woman," said I, exerting my strength to raise her, "you must have met with very hard hearts to be thus surprised and overpowered by a little common humanity towards a poor fellow creature in distress. Pray be calm, that we may cure you and give you an opportunity of making amends for your past life, by becoming a useful and respected member of society."

Before I could contrive to get the poor creature placed in a hackney-coach, which the watchman procured, she had fainted, and was still insensible when, at past one in the morning, I arrived at my own house.

My footman was at that instance setting off for my sister and Dr. Bain: and my good housekeeper was in tears.

"Do not agitate me," said I, "with your questions and all this bustle; I am too ill too endure them; but this distressed object, whom I have met with by mere accident, is worse than I am and more in want of your care. Never mind who or what she is; but pray get her to bed, and see that she has all she requires. Tell her I wish that I could attend her myself; but I am not able."

My good old servant, knowing well how contradiction always irritated me, sent my housemaid to undress me, and hastened to obey my commands.

In about an hour she returned to acquaint me that the poor young girl had fallen asleep, completely worn out with fatigue. "Poor soul!" continued my housekeeper, "she is not long for this world, I fear; yet she is as gentle as a lamb, and nothing like a vulgar or a bad word comes out of her mouth."

My mind was a good deal relieved at this account of my protégée, and I tried to compose myself to rest. It was not however till eight o'clock in the morning that I could close my eyes; and at eleven I put on my dressing-gown, and went to visit the poor invalid. By the first glance on her emaciated countenance, I felt persuaded that nothing would save her, though the poor young woman herself appeared very sanguine.

"If it should please God, my dear lady, to spare me a little longer, you shall never, never have to regret your great goodness. I have not long led this dreadful life. It is scarcely two years ago, since I lived as nursery-maid in a respectable family, where I was a great favourite. There, madam, I became acquainted with a young tradesman, who professed a desire to make me his wife. We kept company for nearly a twelvemonth. He always told me he thought it would be prudent to delay our marriage from day to day, as he was in hourly expectation of the arrival of his father, whose consent he was sure of obtaining, although he should have to dread his displeasure, were he to marry me without it. At last, I discovered by the merest accident that this man had a wife, to whom he had been married four years, as well as three fine young children. I immediately left my place to avoid meeting him again. My mistress strongly recommended me to a friend of her own, as nurse to her infant daughter; but grief preyed so on my mind, that I could not give satisfaction in my situation.

"I was shortly afterwards afflicted with this terrible cough. To drown the anguish of my mind I got into

bad company, and, having lost my character as well as my health, I have, for the last four months, been reduced to eat the bread of sin.

"I have been vainly trying to get into one of the hospitals, but there are no hopes of that," said the poor creature, her tears falling fast down her pale cheeks, "for they say that mine is an incurable disorder which they do not want to be troubled with."

"What unfeeling creatures," said I, "but do not fret, poor soul, or despair. While there is life there is hope. If I cannot get you into a hospital, where you shall have from me linen, tea, wine, and all you may require, you shall be at least as well off in my house, so keep yourself quiet. While I live and you do your duty you shall never want a friend; and if we both die shortly, as may happen, let us hope that God will be found an indulgent father, instead of a severe judge, and will receive us into a better world."

The poor creature absolutely seemed to forget her own severe sufferings, while endeavouring to think of what would best relieve mine.

In the course of the morning Dr. Bain prescribed for her, and promised to bring me a letter for her admittance into St. George's Hospital. On the next morning, when the poor creature was admitted into that Institution, she fainted from excess of joy and gratitude.

Soon after the departure of my protégée, my servant brought me a letter, by the twopenny post; the handwriting was Lord Ponsonby's. Gracious heavens, how my heart beat! I could not open it. I kissed it a thousand times, placed it next my heart—thought I should never have found courage to read it, and when I did at last in fear and trembling, for I had begun to doubt the probability of any good happening to me on earth, it was as follows—very short, and not particularly sweet.

"Why, dearest, will you consider these things so seriously! Upon my honour, upon my soul, I can

say no, in reply to your question: and you may tell the Duke of Argyle that he is mistaken if he thinks me happy. Do you remember what I said to you at our last meeting, and will you do me the justice to believe I did not deceive you? Pray do.

"Adieu,

"PONSONBY."

"Does this man love me!" thought I, half wild with the delightful idea, "and shall we not meet again? Impossible! As friends, at least, we must, shall meet, or I will die in the attempt."

The letter gave me new life, I imagined myself cured. Gay visions of departed happiness filled my imagination. I placed myself before the glass, to contemplate the havoc which sickness and anxiety had made on my features, and sighed heavily. "No matter!" vanity whispered, "I am more interesting; though not half so brilliant"; and then I hoped he would not love me less for the suffering his neglect had occasioned me. This world, said I, is a blank without him. I have endeavoured and prayed for tranquillity of mind in vain, during many long months, which yet have brought me no consolation. Too well I know I must renounce him as a lover; but for ever out of his sight I cannot exist, and longer I will not. I will take him by surprise. I will wait for hours, days, years at his door; but I will hear his voice once more. Shall I continue to suffer thus for what his footmen, tradesmen and valet, enjoy freely every day?

I, who would sign my own death-warrant but once again to kiss the dear hand which inscribed this beautiful little note! What have I done so very wicked, that I may not ever again behold him? I will wait at his door every night that I can ascertain he is from home, and, the first time he happens to return on foot, I cannot fail to see him; and one word he must say to me, if it is but to order me home. Something like the man, who boasted of having been addressed by the Emperor Bonaparte: "What did he say to you?"

somebody asked. "*Va t'en coquin*," answered this true Christian.

Well, then, to conclude, since I am sure my readers are growing as tired of this dismal love-story as I am, I wandered nightly round Lord Ponsonby's house, which I believe I have said was now at the corner of Upper Brook Street, in Park Lane, for nearly a fortnight to no purpose. He returned not before daylight, when I dared not show myself, or he either came in his carriage, or had not left his house. The night air so increased my cough, that, God knows where I found strength for these wild nocturnal promenades; but love does wonders! I passed the whole day coughing in bed, to obtain strength at least to die at his door: for I had taken an oath to behold Ponsonby again or die in the attempt.

One night, dread of observation from the watchman, or insult from the passing strangers, made me parade slowly, on the opposite side of the street, before his house. The moon was shining beautifully, at near one in the morning. A magnificent, tall, elegant man, habited in black, turned hastily round the corner from Park Lane, and knocked loudly at Ponsonby's door. Could I be mistaken? I felt in every drop of my thrilling blood, and at the bottom of my heart, that it was Ponsonby, almost before I had caught a glimpse of him; and, darting across the street, with the light swiftness of former times, alas! *ils étaient passés, ces jours de fêtes là.* A bar of iron across my chest seemed to arrest my flight, and I was compelled to stand quite still for an instant. That instant decided my fate. I obtained Ponsonby's dwelling as the porter shut him out from my sight. The anguish of that moment I will not attempt to describe.

My mouth immediately filled with blood. Whether this was the effect of mental suffering, or whether I had done myself an internal injury by over-exertion, I know not: nor do I scarcely recollect how I happened to find myself in a hackney-coach. All I know

for certain as to the adventures of that miserable night, is that I opened my eyes at five in the morning to behold Dr. Bain and a surgeon, who was binding up my arm to bleed me, my sister Fanny, in tears, and the Duke of Argyle, who stood at the foot of my bed, consulting with Dr. Bain. I know not why the kind, scarlet fever attacked me, in the midst of all my troubles; but that was the disorder under which I suffered.

I will not dwell on what I endured during a fortnight; indeed, as I was so frequently delirious, I knew little about it.

At the end of that time, however, my life was despaired of; but, in a few days, the disorder took a favourable turn and, after lingering six weeks, during which I had full time to reflect on all the follies I had indulged in, and having for more than a week been desired by Dr. Bain to prepare my mind for death, my late passion assumed the character of madness. I considered Ponsonby's conduct towards myself and his wife as equally heartless, and undeserved by all I had suffered for him. I earnestly prayed that he might hereafter make his lady amends for the former neglect I had occasioned her. I no longer desired to see him. "I have suffered too much," I often thought to myself, "and will not dwell on the occasion of it lest I lose sight of that charitable spirit towards all mankind in which I hope to die. Were he now in that room waiting to see me, I should desire him to return to his home and leave me to die in peace." I hoped that God would not be as deaf to his last prayers as he had been to mine. I sent his watch, chain and ring to Amy, to do exactly what she pleased with. I never mentioned Lord Ponsonby but once during my last illness; it was addressing Fanny,—"If ever you meet with him, after my death, tell him that I forgave him: and, for his wife's sake, as well as for his own, I prayed that God would mend his heart; but that I felt no desire to see him, or to take my final leave of him."

During this severe illness, the Duke of Argyle was very attentive to me. He was now the only man living for whom I felt the least interest. My sister Amy knew this, as well as all my late suffering; yet I was scarcely considered convalescent, when she made a desperate attack on Argyle's heart, which he complained of to me in terms of strong disgust. One night in particular before I had left my room, he came to me, after the opera.

"I have had a narrow escape," said Argyle.

"From what?" I asked.

"A rape!" was his reply.

"Who then, in this land of plenty," said I, "is so very hard up?"

"Your sister Amy," returned Argyle. "She asked me to see her to a coach; then insisted on setting me down,—drove me, *bongré, malgré*, to her house; and would make me walk upstairs and sup with her. I was as obstinate as a stoic. 'Why, where are you going?' inquired your sister Amy? 'To a sick relation of yours,' was my answer; at which Amy looked like a fury, as she wished me a good night."

"How you abuse her," said I. "Really you seem to have entirely forgotten our relationship."

"Why," added Argyle, "she sets me the example."

I fought Amy's battles as long and as earnestly as though she had really loved me, assuring Argyle that she was not bold and had been kind to but very few lovers.

Argyle, no doubt from all I said, began to think he had made a valuable conquest, and, rather than the poor thing should die, and appear at his bed-side afterwards, like unfortunate Miss Bailey, I suppose he determined to look at her again the next time he met her.

At that period, I believe he could have attached himself to me very sincerely; more so than formerly. His old friend, Lady W——, was in a very bad state of health, and was not expected to live. Argyle lamented the prospect of her loss, with real friendship,

and would have found consolation in my society, but for my late desperate passion for another, which however I should soon have overcome, now that all was still and calm and quiet about the region of my heart. This calm was heaven to a poor wretch who had undergone so much mental suffering. I could not account for it; or rather, I could still less account for all my former misery.

As soon as I was able to converse, I inquired after my poor protégée, at St. George's Hospital. My housekeeper informed me, that she still lingered in a very hopeless state. The idea of dying without seeing me again appeared to affect her much. I desired my housekeeper to carry her everything she wanted, and to assure her that my very first visit should be to her, the moment Dr. Bain would permit me to leave the house. That very kind friend had so reasoned with me, about the sin and folly of trifling as I had done hitherto with the blessings of health, that I had passed my word to obey him in everything, on pain of incurring his lasting displeasure.

On the very first day I received permission to go out, while my carriage was waiting at the door, I was shocked by a most melancholy scene. The poor young creature from St. George's Hospital, having resisted the persuasions and threats of the matrons, declaring that she would see me before she died, drove up to my door in a hackney-coach literally in the agonies of death! My landlord, who had just called for his rent, hearing from my servants that a dying woman was come to me from the hospital, declared that she should not enter his house. What was to be done? We were all women and could not contend. My footman would have had her brought in by force; but force was the very thing in which the most particlerst man as is was most deficient. The poor creature held out her hands, entreating me for the love of God not to send her away from me in her last moments. The scene was indeed disgraceful to humanity and I was very much affected by it; but

how could I help it? The landord insisted she should not come in. There was no time to be lost, she must go to the workhouse.

"We will lose no time in contention with this unfeeling wretch," said I, "but I will go with you to the workhouse, and nurse you."

"God bless you! God bless you!" exclaimed the poor dying creature, faintly. "I am not afraid of dying, while you are with me."

I will not dwell on a scene, which even at this distant period I cannot remember without shuddering. In less than an hour after my poor protégée was placed on a miserable couch in Marylebone workhouse, she expired in my arms, earnestly and piously recommending her soul to God . . .

My health suffered much from this shock, and it was more than a week after the poor girl's death before I could again venture to leave the house. My sister Fanny at last prevailed on me to go and pass the day with her. There I met Julia, who had forgotten her constant swain, Colonel Cotton, though he still appeared to adore her. She had fallen madly in love with Sir Harry Mildmay, who, for a short time, seemed to return her passion and was really attentive to her, till somebody at Melton Mowbray asked him one day what the deuce he was doing with an old woman who might be his mother! All the love Mildmay ever felt for any daughter of Eve originated in vanity, and was fed and nourished by vanity, therefore, I need not add, that he cut Julia from that hour, and from that hour Julia's passion for him regularly increased; although it was unmixed or unpurified by the least atom of affection.

I inquired after Sophia, who had not been permitted to visit me because the scarlet fever was considered infectious. She was still living in the shabby, confined lodging Deerhurst had provided for her, and Deerhurst also continued to provide her with currant wine and raisin wine! He saw but little of her, and the less the better for the taste of Sophia, who declared

that water was by no means an indispensable requisite at that nobleman's toilette. In short he was as much afraid of it as though he had been bitten by a mad dog.

I desire to know who consoled her for Deerhurst's dirtiness, and Deerhurst's neglect, and was told by Fanny that Colonel Berkeley tried hard to make himself agreeable, to which Julia added, "He is there from morning till night."

"And how does Sophia like him?"

"She dislikes him particularly. Henry De Roos is less disagreeable to her, I believe; but Sophia does not trouble her head for an instant about any man; only she really does wish that Deerhurst would wash himself a little more, and in particular his head."

Fanny went on to say that somebody told him what Sophia said on the subject, and Deerhurst, having accused her of circulating these stories out of school, asked her if he was not remarkably nice in his person.

"I think so," Sophia answered, "very nice indeed, I always said so."

Being still very weak I left them early in the evening, and, passing by Amy's door on my road home, I observed a carriage waiting, very like the Duke of Argyle's. I could not possibly be in love with Argyle that was very certain. I had of late given too many absurd proofs of love for another; and yet I had never ceased to admire and like him. He had lately been my sole friend, and his attention had promoted my recovery. In short, my nerves had undergone a shock, which to this day I have not recovered, nor ever have I enjoyed nor shall I, most probably, enjoy another hour's health.

At that time a mere nothing affected me. I hastily pulled the check-string and requested my servant to inquire of the coachman if that was really the equipage of His Grace. He was answered in the affirmative. I am ashamed to confess how much and how long this circumstance affected me. It was painful to my heart to acknowledge a sister so unnatural, and it caused another relapse. Amy heard the occasion of it and,

sporting fine feelings, one fine morning after having by my kind recommendation lived with Argyle more than a month and become pregnant by him, she came suddenly into my room and, observing my deathlike aspect, began to blubber downright.

Hypocrisy was very disgusting to me. I had, in full, warm, sisterly confidence introduced her to the duke and praised her to him, till I changed his disgust into something like partiality: dressed her up in my own elegant clothes, because hers were always as shabby as they were showy, in the style of her black-pudding dinners and champagne suppers: and she intruded herself into my house, warm from the embraces of my lover, to show off tenderness! I experienced a sudden fit of rage almost amounting to madness.

"You disgusting, deceitful creature!" I exclaimed, locking her in my room and taking out the key, "since you have forced your company on me you shall repent it." I then looked round for some instrument to execute vengeance!

Readers, can you conceive anything half so monstrous, half so ruinous to black-pudding men, so destructive to the rising generation?

I was just thinking about killing her!

Amy opened the window, and called out to a boy in the street, that a wicked woman who was no better than she should be had locked her in.

"I shouldn't wonder," answered the boy, laughing and running away, "a pair of you, no doubt!"

I, by this time, was heartily ashamed of having been thus surprised into temporary madness, owing to the extreme irritability of my nerves.

"Go out of the house," said I, "for God's sake; there is something too indelicate and disgusting in your pity. You are very welcome to live with Argyle, if you can endure the idea. I certainly felt the loss of a friend, in my present low nervous state; but His Grace knows well that I have been in love with another for the last three years, one on whom

your soft circular effusions made not the slightest impression, unless of disgust."

I hastened out of the room and locked myself in my bed-chamber. Amy's visit, I afterwards found, was in consequence of the anxiety Argyle had expressed concerning my health, and Amy guessed that she must show off sisterly affection, or Argyle would dislike her!

The next day Argyle visited me. He was very melancholy, and had scarcely shaved since Lady W——'s death, which had lately taken place. He reminded me that, when he dearly loved me, I never *gênée'd* myself or him; that he was now unhappy and could have devoted himself to me; but that he saw no hopes of a steady return.

"Yes! but then a sister!" said I; "the idea to me is so disgusting—but do not let us dwell on it, I forgive anything in your conduct which has caused me pain, and destroyed the possibility of our ever being more than friends for the rest of our lives:—and yet I trust we shall never be less. A very trifle affects me now; so do not be too vain, nor attribute to sentiment what is due to the scarlet fever. You believed me incapable of steady regard; because I did not fix my undivided affections on you, after I had learned, from your own letter, now in my possession, that you could not be wholly mine. Is that fair, or rather are not you a terrible coxcomb, master Argyle?

"Apropos, for here must end all sentiment between us, so, to talk of something else, Mr. Colman accuses you of having cut him dead in the Park yesterday when he bowed to you."

"What a vulgar fellow!" Argyle remarked.

"Why vulgar?"

"It is a vulgar idea, and one which certainly never occurred to me; not because I happen to be Duke of Argyle; for a private gentleman's rank in society is the same as mine; therefore what right have I to cut him? or what right would any duke have to cut

a private gentleman? If a man does not return my bow I take it for granted he is absent, or not in the humour, or thinking of something else. Tell Mr. Colman he is an ass, my dear pretty——"

"Argyle!" interrupted I, "no more dear prettys, if you please. I have left off being pretty; but thank God I am heartwhole, and propose remaining so to the end of my natural life. Nevertheless, whatever the cause may be, I am truly sorry to see you so changed, and so melancholy."

"Thank you," returned Argyle, sighing. "Then oblige me, and don't tell anybody in the world that I am unhappy."

His Grace seemed to leave me with regret. I did not invite him to repeat his visit.

My health soon after this began to improve rapidly. My late fever seemed to have carried away all the oppression on my chest, except what was the mere effect of debility.

I took an early opportunity of paying Sophia a visit, and I had scarcely time to inquire after that young lady's *petite société*, before Colonel Berkeley was announced. It was in the evening, at about eight o'clock. He was very lively and agreeable, which I think was generally the case with him. The man bears an indifferent character and, perhaps, with some reason; but I have always seen him pleasant, and I never knew or heard of his breaking his word. His fancy for Sophia did not prevent his being polite and attentive to me, as often happens with ill-bred young men of the present day.

In less than half an hour after Colonel Berkeley's arrival in bounced Lord Deerhurst, in an agony of tears!

"Oh Sophy! Sophy!" exclaimed his lordship, blubbering and wiping his eyes with a very dirty, little, old, red pocket-handkerchief—"Oh Sophy, I never thought you would have used me in this way!"

Sophy declared herself innocent, which was indeed the fact as far as regarded Colonel Berkeley.

"I cannot bear it," continued Deerhurst, rushing out of the room, like the strolling representative of a tragic king in a barn, and, seating himself on the stairs, near the street-door, to sob and blubber more at his ease.

Colonel Berkeley looked at his lordship in utter astonishment, exclaiming, "My good fellow, what the devil is the matter?"

"Why! did you not—" he paused.

"Did he not what?" I asked.

"Oh, Lord! oh, dear!" roared out Deerhurst.

"Don't take on so, my lord," interposed Sophia's fat landlady, offering his lordship a glass of water.

Deerhurst accepted it with apparent gratitude, as though quite subdued.

"Could you have believed it, madam?" said he. "Did you believe that young creature was so depraved?"

"What do you mean by depraved?" I asked. "Why I can answer for it, Sophia has never given Colonel Berkeley the slightest encouragement, and beyond a mere yes or no she never opens her lips to him."

"Oh! don't tell me! don't tell me!" still blubbered his lordship, the big tears rolling down his cheeks.

"This is incredibly astonishing!" ejaculated Colonel Berkeley, in a very natural tone of surprise.

"What is incredibly astonishing?" I asked. "I am determined to understand this. In fact, I think I have guessed already. Lord Deerhurst, by the restoration of his annuity, will put two hundred pounds a year into his pocket on Sophia's first act of infidelity. You are his friend, and have done nothing but express your astonishment at his lordship's tears and apparent jealousy ever since he came blubbering into the room; therefore, since his arrival so quickly succeeded yours, I will lay my life you two desperate *mauvais sujets* came here together!"

"Nonsense!" replied Colonel Berkeley, laughing.

"I am now sure of it," added I.

Colonel Berkeley slily nodded assent to my remark.

Deerhurst was smelling a bottle of hartshorn, which Sophia's landlaady held fast to the end of his nose. Berkeley addressed Sophia in a whisper. Deerhurst jumped up like a madman, and was leaving the room.

"My good fellow," said the colonel taking Lord Deerhurst by the arm, for this excellent acting had really deceived even Berkeley himself, whom his lordship had brought to Sophia's door in his own carriage for the express purpose of taking her off his hands, "If you really are annoyed at my visit, if you have changed your mind—only say so, and I give you my word I will not call on Sophia again. Be a man! don't make this noise and bellowing; but tell me frankly what you wish. You and I are old friends,"

Deerhurst said that his feelings were wounded and his heartstrings cracked: therefore he must go home and get them mended: and he darted out of the house.

"What the deuce can all this mean?" said Berkeley. "The man really is unhappy. I must go after him."

"Take me with you," I said, "just to gratify my curiosity.'

"With all my heart," replied Berkeley, "if my carriage is at the door."

"Did not you drive here in it?"

"No," whispered he, "Deerhurst brought me with him, and I desired my coachman to follow with my *vis-à-vis*."

We found it at the door, and were set down at Lord Deerhurst's house in Half Moon Street.

We were shown into the drawing-room, where, after waiting about five minutes, his lordship half-opened the door of his bedroom, which was the one adjoining, and showed us such a merry looking face, *qu'il n'etait plus réconnaissable.*

"Glad to see you both," said his lordship, wiping his hands with a very dirty towel. "Will you come in? But you must excuse the disorder. You know it is a mere bachelor's room," continued he, lighting a

long tallow-candle by a short piece, which was burning in a broken candlestick.

"Why don't you ride and tye regularly with your two muttons," said I, "when you want to be economical? and then no one would know they had not been allowed to burn on together with an equal flame like you and Sophia."

"Oh Lord!" said Deerhurst, laughing, "I can't cry any more at this moment, for I have just washed my face."

"But seriously," Colonel Berkeley observed, "I have followed you because, upon my soul, I do not understand you. I want to know whether my attentions to Sophia are really disagreeable; for I don't see how a man could command so many tears to flow at pleasure."

"Oh! there was a boy at Westminster could cry a great deal better than I can," said Deerhurst.

"I won't believe you," retorted Berkeley, laughing, "unless you'll sit down on that chair and favour me with another cry: and first ring for some proper candles, will you? How came those stinking butchers' candles in your room?"

"Bachelor, you know, bachelor!" said Deerhurst, grinning.

"What the devil has that to do with it?" exclaimed Berkeley.

Deerhurst excused himself, declaring that tears, even sham ones, must be spontaneous: "And yet," said he, sinking into an arm-chair, and again taking out the selfsame dirty, little, red, calico pocket-handkerchief, "and yet, though I appear a wild, profligate, hardened young man, I never think of that sweet girl Sophia without its bringing tears into my eyes:" and he blubbered aloud, and again the big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"This would melt a heart of stone," I observed, putting on my cloak, "so I am off."

"What! won't you have any more?" said Deerhurst, jumping up and laughing.

"Capital!" exclaimed Berkeley, taking up his hat.

"Why, you are not going to trust yourself in that rake's carriage alone?" said Deerhurst to me.

"I am afraid there is no danger," answered I.

"Some of the most virtuous ladies in England have been attacked by the gay colonel until they have called out murder; and two of them lost their diamond brooches coming from the Opera, before they could get hold of the check-string——"

"Or cry out, stop thief!" added I. "For my part I have more reasons than one for believing the colonel to be very harmless in a carriage, or I should not have ventured. I, too, have heard of his gallant feats of prowess in chariots and *vis-à-vis!* but I will tell you a story:—There was a pretty, elegant Frenchwoman joined my party one night after the Opera, and explained to me the mere accident which threw her on my charity for a safe conveyance home. I had already Fanny, Julia, and little Fanny, as we called my young niece, to carry home, and only a chariot. What was to be done? The rain fell in torrents. It was on a Tuesday night, and there was nobody in the round room that anybody knew, as that fool of a Brummell used to say, except Colonel Berkeley, who joined us immediately. In spite of the most prolific account I had heard of the gay colonel, I considered my friend old enough to take care of herself: and, as to sending her three miles in such a costume, at such an hour, and in such weather, the thing was out of the question: so I told Berkeley that I must intrude on his politeness to set my friend down. 'To oblige you, with great pleasure,' was his prompt reply, before he had even looked in the face of the young Frenchwoman, to whom I presented him, when he assured her his coachman waited for her commands.

"The next morning I made it a point to call and inquire after madame's health. She thanked me for having procured her so polite an acquaintance. 'I hope he was polite,' said I, 'for, to tell you the truth,

I very unwillingly placed you under his protection. 'Why?' asked my friend. 'To be frank with you, I replied, 'Colonel Berkeley is said to be such a terrible fellow that no woman can safely remain a single instant *tête-à-tête* with him, particularly in a carriage. I understand he attacks both old and young, virtuous and wicked, handsome and ugly, maid, wife and widow.'

"'And sal I be de only exception?' asked the Frenchwoman, in real dismay.

"'What then,' I inquired, in astonishment, 'are you sorry he was not impudent to you?' 'I do not conceive what you have told me, impudence,' continued the Frenchwoman, '*nous prenons cela autrement, en France.* De only impudence vat I sal never forgive, is dat Colonel Berkeley have presumed to make me de exception and, if I ever meet him in de street, *je lui cracherai au nez.*'

"'*Non pas! non pas!*' rejoined I, 'you are too pretty to have been an exception. It is a mere false character they have given the colonel, or may be he set it about himself. For my part, I will take the first opportunity of getting into his carriage, in order to convince you of another exception, that you may hold up your head with the best of us.'" This night has already proved I was right.

"Oh, Lord, what a falling off is here!" said Deerhurst to Berkeley.

"I had no desire for your Frenchwoman," replied the colonel, "and, as for you, if you would not fall in love with me some time ago, when I was your very humble servant, what chance had I after you had seen me making love to Sophia? Besides my poor brother Augustus is going mad for you, Harriette, and, apropos of him, you really treat him very ill."

"I mean to have that young gentleman confined to a madhouse," said I, "if he conducts himself in such a strange way again as he did last Saturday; throwing himself on his knees in my box, and acting his Cheltenham-tragedies at the opera."

"He is very handsome," Deerhurst observed.

"A mere ruffian!" I retorted.

"Do not be so severe on poor Augustus," said Colonel Berkeley, who was always the most affectionate brother I ever met with in my life. "He is a sailor, you know, and upon my honour he is very fond of you. I want you and Sophia to favour me with your company to dine at Richmond on Monday, and, if you will trust yourself to my care, I will drive my barouche."

"Willingly," answered I.

"But this is not all," continued the Colonel. "I am commissioned to intercede for Augustus."

"I am off then," said I, "for your brother is much too rude for my present state of health, and would I know tease me into a fever."

"Upon my word," said Berkeley, "I can make him do just what I please, and I have only interceded for him after receiving his promise not to say or do anything that can possibly offend."

The engagement was concluded for Monday, and Deerhurst begged to be of our party.

"No more of your rural fighting parties for me," I hastily observed, "and I neither like eggs and bacon nor pot-houses to eat my dinner in."

"No!" said Berkeley, laughing heartily, "did he really give you eggs and bacon for dinner?"

"And in the dog-days too!" continued I.

We then took our leave, and Colonel Berkeley set me down at my own door in perfect safety.

CHAPTER X

THE next day I dined with Julia, Fanny was of the party. Julia was raving about Sir Henry Mildmay, by whom she professed to be pregnant. The shy Julia gloried in this *faux pas.*

"What mortal could have resisted such an angel!" exclaimed Julia.

"And Cotton?" added I.

"By your advice," replied Julia, "I have refused to receive him but as a friend."

"Certainly," said I; "I do think it wicked to put ourselves in the way of increasing a large family of children, only to starve them. You are the mother of six already, which is five more than your slender fortune can support."

"I shall have seven thousand a year at the death of my brother, who is in a decline," said Julia, whose eyes were very red as though she had been weeping.

To my inquiry, "What was the matter?" Fanny answered, "That the foolish creature had done nothing but shed tears from morning till night."

"If I could only once more have Mildmay in my arms," said Julia, "I should have lived long enough."

"And who is to protect Mildmay's child?" I asked.

"I would rather die than apply to him for money," answered Julia; "but my poor child will never see the light," and she burst into tears, "unless I see its beautiful father once more."

"Will once do?" I asked.

"I would be patient and resigned if I could kiss his heavenly eyes once more."

"*Et puis?*" said Fanny.

"*Sans doute! ça va, sans dire,*" added Julia.

"*Pas toujours,*" I remarked however, giving my hand to Julia, "there is my hand on it, it shall be done, ma'am, and before this week is out, we pledge to you our royal word!"

Strange to say, this promise satisfied Julia, who immediately dried up her tears.

After dinner, a young member of Parliament, of immense fortune, brought his carriage for Fanny. He was a Hampshire gentleman, of the name of Napier, who had been lately very attentive to her; but Fanny did not like him. He was a long-backed youth, with very fine eyes, and that was all: a sort of home-bred young man, not ungentlemanlike but wanting tact and spirit.

Soon after his arrival Fanny took me out of the room and asked me how I liked him.

"Oh! not in the least," I answered.

"I wish," said Fanny, "he would attach himself to poor Julia: her children and her debts and her natural turn for extravagance will send her to a prison, unless a rich man like this would take her under his protection. Now, as I am determined not to have him myself I have left them together, that he may draw her into conversation, and find out the truth of her being one of the most elegant women in England."

"You are very good," said I, laughing.

"What else can be done?" Fanny asked. "If Julia goes to prison, she will immediately destroy herself; and how easily this Napier, who has more than twenty thousand a year, can assist her and pay off all her debts, seeing that he lives on three thousand, and possesses in hard cash at his banker's more than a hundred thousand pounds."

"Oh! the vile, stingy monster!" said I, "where did he spring from?"

"From Oxford College," answered Fanny; "but his estates are in Ireland."

When we returned to the drawing-room, Napier

did seem to have fallen in love with Julia's manner, and to be delighted with her conversation. However, he soon placed himself by Fanny's side, to make as much love as usual. "This is very poor sort of amusement for me, ladies," said I, "so I shall wish you all a very good night."

Fanny declared that she would accompany me.

Napier called her a coquette, and a false deceiver, reminding her of her promise to allow him to see her home.

"Cannot help it," answered Fanny, kissing her hand to him, and hurrying downstairs.

Napier offered me his arm, to follow, and Julia held up her finger significantly to me, saying, "Remember."

"*Oui, oui,*" was my reply; and, after Napier had handed us into our carriage, we requested him to return and chat with Julia. "A niece of Lord Carysfort," added I, "daughter to a maid of honour, the Honourable Mrs. Storer, and the most graceful creature breathing."

"Why," said Fanny, bursting out into a loud laugh, "Harriette, that madman with his placard and his challenge to all the world about Bayley's blacking, in Piccadilly, is a fool to you."

"Never mind," I answered, "so that we can but get her off, and save her from a prison."

Before the carriage drove from the door, we had the satisfaction of seeing Napier return to Julia—*et puis—et puis*—but I will tell what happened some other time.

On our way home Fanny told me how irregularly her allowance from the late Mr. Woodcock was paid, and that her boy George's schoolmaster had been dunning her for money due to him, which she could not pay.

"How good you are then," said I, "to make over your rich conquest to Julia."

"There is no goodness in that," answered Fanny, whose heart was so very warm, that she was always

afraid of incurring ridicule from the extreme of a good thing; "for if Julia had never been born I am sure I could not have endured that long-backed, amorous-looking Napier; besides every one must pity poor Julia, deserted as she is!"

"But then this stupid Mildmay, whose character was so well known to her! what had she to expect from him, who has never in his life been suspected of constancy for a single week!"

"And yet," said Fanny, "I really, myself, believed he loved Julia. You have no idea how attentive he had been to her during your last illness, from which, thank God! you are happily recovering," added Fanny. "I have not seen you look so like yourself for the last twelve months."

"I am better," answered I, "and yet, life is dull without affection, and all my bright illusions are destroyed for ever; but I have most pleasure now when I can make myself a little useful; so you must let me take George off your hands. I am richer than you are, I will therefore pay his schoolmaster, and you must send him to me to-morrow. When his holidays are expired, I will myself take him back to school."

Fanny said I was very good, and I answered "fiddlestick!" as I set her down at her own house.

My mind was now a complete blank. My imagination was exhausted; my castle had fallen to the ground and I never expected to rebuild it; for even my cool judgment told me that Ponsonbys were not often to be met with.

I had no fancy for going down hill, so I bought a great many books and determined to make them my object. I lived very retired, and when I did go out or admit company it was more because I was teased into it than from any pleasure I found in society.

Little George Woodcock came to me the next morning, and before the week was out he had broken

open my jewel-box, stolen my money, kissed my housemaid, and half-killed my footman. I looked forward with much anxiety to the period for taking him back to school. His schoolmaster was an old Frenchman who lived at Leytonstone. Julia's three sons and my nephew had boarded with him four years.

"Mastaire Johnstones know very vell," said the old Frenchman, when, at the beginning of the holidays, he had called on Fanny to make his compliments of her son and heir, "de young Mastaire Johnstones know very well, dat I always tell de boys dat dey must larne; but for Mastaire Woodcock, it is de boy of my school! Some time I lose him six, seven hours, and, at last, I find him at de top of von apple-tree! Den as for boxing, he is box! box! two, tree, six time in a day. I believe very soon, he will box me!"

Fanny promised to give him good advice, and the old French schoolmaster took his leave, after declaring that if young Woodcock continued to be de boy of his school for the next quarter, he must be under the necessity to turn him out of it.

Luttrell called on me the following day, and was greatly amused with the engagement which I told him I had entered into with Julia. He informed me that Fred Lamb was arrived from the court of somewhere, I think Sicily, and had expressed a very strong desire to be allowed to visit me.

"Tell him," said I, "that I am worn out, and tired of the world, and good for nothing."

Luttrell, being our father-confessor general, to whom we all related everything, I asked him if he knew how Napier's *tête-à-tête* with Julia went off.

"Oh, I have just left the enemy," answered Luttrell, alluding to Amy, "who told me that Napier had made a violent attack on the virtue of Lord Carysfort's niece, in consequence of my flourishing panegyric, which had only served to prove her adamant to all but Sir Henry Mildmay."

"Apropos of that gay baronet," said I, opening my writing desk, "such virtue as you describe in this fair daughter of a maid of honour must not go unrewarded;" and I wrote a polite note to Mildmay, desiring him to call upon me in the evening.

Soon after Luttrell had taken his leave, old Smith the haberdasher was announced, with more returned bills.

"Angels defend us!" said I, "what am I to say to him this time?" I looked in the glass, settled my headdress as becomingly as possible, and trusted to my charms and soft speeches for subduing his anger as usual.

As I entered I caught a full view of my friend Smith in the glass; he was pacing the room with sturdy firmness, as though preparing himself for a desperate attack. His brow was knit, and, in his hand he held the fatal black pocket-book which I had no doubt contained my bills, six or seven times returned on his hands. "*Avec tout mon savoir faire, je craignais de ratter le procureur*," as Laura says in *Gil Blas;* I therefore returned to my bedroom unseen, and desired my faithful housekeeper, Mrs. Kennedy, to declare that her mistress had been seized with a fit on her way downstairs, and that, during the last attack of this sort, with which she had been afflicted, she had actually bitten her nurse's thumb clean off.

"Will you like to step up and see her?" added Kennedy.

"No, no, I thank you," answered Smith, putting on a pair of his thickest beaver gloves as though to defend his thumbs. "Some other time if you please. My compliments:" and he was hurrying away.

"You will oblige me by stepping upstairs," said Kennedy, "as I really am frightened out of my wits; and Miss Wilson requires at least three persons to hold her when in these fits, and our William is just gone out with a letter to Sir Henry Mildmay's."

"Very sorry to hear it," replied Smith running downstairs. "I regret that I have such a particular

engagement that I cannot stay another instant," and he immediately gained the street-door, which he took care to fasten safely, as soon as he was on what he now conceived the right side of it.

In the evening, Mildmay arrived at the hour I had appointed, believing no doubt, that the poor tender soul, Harriette Wilson, would not survive his neglect. He was proceeding in a very summary way to practical love-making——

"*Attendez, un instant, mon ange!*" said I. "I am Julia's friend; besides, I have no opinion of you."

"In what way?"

"In the way you wish to shine! I believe you to be cold, and I hate cold men."

"Try me," answered Mildmay.

"*Je ne demande pas mieux.* Give me the proof I am going to ask, of your real genuine ardour, and I shall hereafter look up to you as something superior to the rest of mankind."

"Explain!" said Sir Henry.

"Well then, there is Julia, of whom I know you are completely tired. Only enable her to praise you to me to-morrow evening, and I think I shall not be able to resist you."

"Will you promise?" Mildmay asked.

"What is the use of a promise to such a beautiful creature as you, who know yourself to be irresistible."

Mildmay looked pleased. I made him sing to me; and I must really have been very deficient in good taste if I had not expressed my admiration of the sweetness of his voice and expression. When I had completely flattered and praised him into excellent temper, I made him promise to visit Julia by two the next day.

"Shall I find you there?" Mildmay inquired, "and will you give me a kiss? otherwise, upon my honour, with the best possible intention to distinguish myself I am afraid."

"Perhaps," said I, "you may find me with her; but at all events recollect that you did like poor Julia, and

that I never to the day of my death will forgive you or speak to you if you do not fulfil your promise to-morrow morning."

"You treat me very ill," said Mildmay, "and yet, I suppose, you must be obliged. Only mind you must promise me there shall not be a scene between Julia and me. I cannot stand scenes, remember!"

"I was in hopes there would be act the fourth," retorted I; "but, seriously, what do you understand by a scene?"

"Reproaches and hysterics, and all that sort of thing," answered Mildmay. "Do tell Julia it will be of no use, but to spoil the moment, there is a dear creature."

"Poor Julia!" I retorted. "Only recollect her situation, and pray, if you ever wish me to admire or like you do not be so very unfeeling."

"Yes, I have heard all, and a pretty piece of business it is altogether," said Mildmay, evidently much annoyed by it.

I refused to part with him till he had most faithfully promised punctually at two the next morning. As soon as he was gone I despatched the following note:

"Dear Julia,—"Sir H. Mildmay has this morning given me his word and honour, on pain of my everlasting displeasure, that he will attend your moderate commands to-morrow exactly at two o'clock, on condition that you do not give him a scene. Make my excuses to him for not joining you both. I dislike to be second fiddle of all things.

"God bless you."

CHAPTER XI

THE next day, the one fixed on by Colonel Berkeley for our trip to Richmond, Sophia and the Colonel called for me at twelve o'clock, accompanied by that young savage, Augustus Berkeley, who appeared to be perfectly well-behaved in the presence of his brother, quite mild and humbled.

Sophia said it was a charming day.

"The atmosphere," I observed, "is heavy, I think, and unhealthy."

"Oh, quite shocking," Sophia immediately replied, "I am absolutely ill with it already."

We drove down to Richmond as fast as four high bred horses could carry us, and Colonel Berkeley, having ordered a dinner as much too ostentatiously extravagant as Deerhurst's rural fête had been too scanty, proposed our rowing down the river for half an hour, while it was getting ready.

Augustus, at the word of command, took off his coat and waistcoat and began rowing, while Berkeley was all attention to us.

"How delicious this is," said the Colonel.

"I never saw anything so beautiful," echoed Sophia.

I remarked that I was a little giddy.

"So am I," said Sophia, "very giddy indeed."

In less than an hour, I mentioned that the air of the river had given me an appetite, and Sophia, of course, had never been so hungry in all her life!

Colonel Berkeley on landing astonished the two boatmen by throwing them a five-pound note! The innkeeper entertained us in his best and most magni-

ficent style. We conversed a great deal, for Colonel Berkeley can talk, which is not always the case nor considered at all a necessary accomplishment in gentlemen of the present day. There are in fact various kinds of gentlemen. A man is a gentleman, according to Berkeley Craven's definition of the word, who has no visible means of gaining his livelihood; others have called Lord Deerhurst and Lord Barrymore and Lord Stair gentlemen, because they are Lords; and the system at White's Club, the members of which are all choice gentlemen of course, is and ever has been never to blackball any man who ties a good knot in his handkerchief, keeps his hands out of his breeches-pockets, and says nothing. For my part, I confess I like a man who can talk and contribute to the amusement of whatever society he may be placed in; and that is the reason I am always glad to find myself in the company of Lord Hertford, notwithstanding he is so often blackballed at White's.

Colonel Berkeley and I conversed on many subjects; but there was one which was a favourite with us both—plays. Berkeley was mad for acting Shakespeare's plays, I for reading them. We were both lost in wonder as to how the poet, or any one man breathing, could have acquired such a perfect knowledge of human nature, in every class of society, in every gradation from kings downwards. I however pointed out one exception, remarking that I did not conceive, from the little I had seen or heard of Jews, that Shylock was at all a natural character or accurately drawn. "I never in my life," I continued, "remember having heard of a Jew being hanged for murder! The Mosaic laws are less pure than ours; but they are more strictly followed. The most malicious Jew dares not shed blood, his strong fear of God prevents it; and that fear is religion. In short, such, I have heard, is the superstitious fear a Jew entertains of shedding blood, that even if he had made his mind up to take the life of a Christian, it would yet be accomplished without a drop of blood being spilt. I

cannot with my very confined knowledge of these things venture to say that Jews have not been occasionally executed for murder; but I can almost venture to assert that blood-shedding is far from the characteristic vice of a Jew; and therefore is Shylock unnaturally drawn."

"Recollect," returned Colonel Berkeley, "that Shylock is a Venetian Jew."

I went on—"And shall we attribute to these poor wanderers the peculiar crimes of every nation which may happen to give them birth, adding these to all the characteristic vices of their tribe? If the mere climate made a Venetian of Shylock, why does Shakespeare point at him as an usurer? If climate and example have no effect to make the Hebrew waver in his faith, is it charitable to suppose them more potent in tending to deaden the fear and horror of bloodshed in the mind of a poor Jew?"

"Bravo!" said Colonel Berkeley, "very ingeniously argued. There's a cunning Israelite at the bottom of all this, who has won your heart."

Sophia, for once in her life, ventured to be of a different opinion from her company, remarking that she was sure her sister Harriette could not love any of those nasty men, with long dirty beards and dirty old clothes on their backs.

"I thank heaven," said I, "that I love no man; Jew, Christian, or Turk."

"Why defend those nasty fellows then?" asked Augustus.

"Did you ever know any good of one of them?" said the colonel.

"A Jew, named Town," answered I, "a painter, who keeps a shop in Bond-street, went down to Newcastle about five years ago, to sketch views in that country. One morning he observed a lad driving his cattle along a field whose countenance particularly struck him. His was a true Roman head. The boy was about twelve years of age. The Jew called to him and asked him if he would stand still while he

took his picture. The youth consented with good-nature ; but, after having stood stock still for a quarter of an hour, he declared that he could not bear it any longer. Mr. Town asked him many questions, and, being much surprised with the boy's sensible replies, inquired if he would like to go up to London with him. The lad hesitated.

"'You will not trust yourself with me then?' said the Jew. 'I would go anywhere with you, sir; but my poor father and mother are so old.' The Jew requested to be made known to them, and was conducted to a wretched hovel where the ancient pair resided. They immediately consented to place their child under the Jew-protector, and the next morning the Israelite and his young protégé were on their road to London. On their arrival the Jew clothed the boy handsomely and instructed him in the first rudiments of his art. Before the child had received a dozen lessons, Mr. Town foretold that he would excel as a painter: he therefore bound him apprentice for seven years to himself, and stipulated to allow him ten shillings a week pocket-money for the first two years, and then to go on doubling that sum every second year to the end of his apprenticeship. The progress the youth made astonished the Jew. The child excelled most particularly in landscape-painting. Bred in the country, he had attentively observed the effect of lightning on trees and cattle. His gratitude to his kind benefactor knew no bounds, and his industry was indefatigable. Mr. Town, fearing lest from inexperience the poor lad might be led astray or fall into bad company, instead of sending him to school engaged masters in the house, to instruct him in reading and writing. His progress in these was almost equal to that he had made in drawing. He became the delight and comfort of Mr. Town's aged father, on whom he was never tired of attending, he would read to him for hours together, and be grateful for the task.

"One day the Jew sent his protégé into the country to take a sketch of some willow trees, and was surprised

to see him return in tears. 'What is the matter my poor fellow?' said the Jew. 'That brook, near which I have been sitting to sketch these trees, sir, reminded me so much of one near my poor mother's hut, answered the lad. 'You shall go down to Newcastle, and pay a visit to your parents', said the benevolent Jew, 'and it shall not cost you one shilling, so prepare yourself to depart by the coach next week.' The boy shed tears of gratitude.

"On the day previous to his departure for Newcastle, he said he wished to ask a favour of his kind master's only sister; but feared it might be deemed impertinent. Being encouraged to proceed—'Why, sir,' said the lad, 'your great goodness has left me nothing to desire since the first instant I entered your house; therefore, out of the allowance of pocket-money you have made me I have saved up eleven pounds, which I hope your sister will condescend to lay out for me in blankets and various other articles of comfort, which I am desirous of carrying down to my poor old parents.' The Jew gladly promised to prevail on his sister to do whatever he wished, and moreover assured the affectionate lad that he should be allowed to make a yearly visit to his parents as long as they lived, and always at his expense. Tell your parents that, though a Jew myself, I have not presumed to interfere with your former mode of worship; but, on the contrary, have made you regularly attend the service of the Church of England, ever since you left them.'"

Sophia was very much pleased with the story of the Newcastle shepherd-boy, and declared that she would go and see him.

Augustus thought he would play Romeo delightfully; but the colonel said the part of Douglas would suit him best.

I, by this time, conceived I had talked quite enough for one evening. I therefore endeavoured with all my might to call Sophia out, and draw her into some kind of conversation

Berkeley was beginning to think himself trifled with, and, being naturally a little abrupt in such cases, he told her flatly that if she meant to refuse him after all, she ought not to have admitted him so often.

Sophia continned to hint, with proper delicacy and due modest blushes, that her living with him or not must depend on what his intentions were: in other words, she gently intimated that as yet she was ignorant what settlement he meant to make on her. The gay handsome Colonel Berkeley's vanity being now so deeply wounded, he in his sudden rage entirely lost sight of what was due to the soft sex, at least to that part of it which had been so hard upon him.

"Do you fancy me then so humble and so void of taste as to buy with my money the reluctant embraces of any woman breathing? Do you think I cannot find friends who have proved their affection by the sacrifices they have made for me, that I should give my money to buy the cold-blooded being who calculates at fifteen years of age what the prostitution of her person ought to sell for?"

Sophia was frightened and shed tears.

"Colonel Berkeley," said I, "we are your visitors and wish to retire immediately from such unmanly insult as you have offered to us. Will you procure us some safe conveyance? No matter what."

Colonel Berkeley immediately begged pardon with much apparent humility, saying, "I am a passionate, ill-tempered, spoiled fellow, and must throw myself on your charity; or if you prefer it my carriage is at the service of you both, and neither I nor my brother shall intrude without your permission."

I shook hands with him, as did Sophia, and little more was said. We all returned home together, but in silence, and Colonel Berkeley never afterwards sought Sophia's society.

The next day I had the satisfaction of driving down to Leytonstone with my young torment of a nephew,

and I left him under the protection of his schoolmaster, Mr. Codroie.

"Ah! ah!" said the Frenchman, "here is de boy of my school again."

I assured George in his presence that if I heard any complaints, or if he was turned out of his school, I would use my interest to get him immediately sent to sea: but promised to give him every possible encouragement if I received a good account of him.

I got home by about five o'clock, and found Fred Lamb in my little library looking over my books. I felt annoyed by this intrusion; but Frederick appeared to take so strong an interest in all I had been reading and doing since we last met, that my heart failed me, after I tried to quarrel with him.

"I never saw a girl, except yourself," said Frederick, "possessing unbounded liberty from the age of fourteen, without a single friend or anything better to guide her than her own romantic imagination, who yet contrives to grow wiser every year, to reflect, to read, and to improve her mind, in the midst of such flattery as you are surrounded by."

Fred Lamb did actually say all this: but I do not tell my reader that I was vain enough to believe above half of it; for, though I had bought my books to be ready, in case a fit of reading should happen to come over me, yet I must confess that, hitherto, I have not had a call, as Lord Headfort said.

"Apropos to what?"

"I'll tell you——

"At Brighton, I used to make a general postman of the good Marquis of Headfort, who had long been our family's friend, equally at hand to congratulate us on our marriages, our birth-days, or our expected deaths. 'Send all your letters to me at Brighton, under cover to Headfort,' I used to say to everybody who could not frank, or were so cut off from the blessings of this life, as not to have a member belonging to them. Headfort, having a packet of letters to bring up to me every morning from the Pavilion

to Prospect-house, which was the dignified appellation my landlord bestowed on my humble cottage at Brighton, I requested he would rap twice only; according to the etiquette observed by other postmen.

"'How much?' one day asked my stupid new servant, for which I discharged her on the spot, for how could one live with an animal so little alive to the sublime and beautiful, as to have mistaken the Marquis of Headfort, wrapped up in an old great coat on a rainy day, for a common general postman! I was really very much shocked indeed.

"'Come upstairs, my dear Marquis,' said I, 'and see me discharge this fool directly.'

"Take off your great coat.

"'Ah! *vous voila*, Marquis, *de haut en bas. Dites, donc, mon cher, en parlant du bas*, who do you make love to now? for it cannot be supposed a gay deceiver like yourself can be satisfied with old Mrs. Massey all your life, although that crim. con. affair of yours did cost you so much money.'

"'Oh, my dear child,' answered poor Headfort, 'it is more than ten years since Mrs. Massey has cut me dead, as her lover.'

"'Why?' I asked.

"'Don't you know, my dear, that she has turned methodist, and thinks it wicked.'

"'But then,' said I, 'it is still lucky for you, that her conscience permits her to make use of your house, purse, equipage and private boxes!'

"'Yes,' said Headfort, 'she still does me that honour; for which I pay very dear, particularly on a Sunday, when she reads me *Letters from the Dead to the Living*, till I am almost tempted to wish her own signature at the bottom of them.'

"'With whom pray do you console yourself?'

"I have not had a call, my dear, for the last five years!'

"'It will come on you when you shall be born again, by the assistance of Mrs. Massey's prayers,' I remarked."

I am, however, wandering from my subject.

No matter, it was a very bad one!

It was Fred Lamb who dined with me, read to me, talked of love to me, and looked all passion, just like the satyr of my vision.

'What vision, pray?' the reader asks; that is to say if ever I should be honoured with a reader, which is not at all certain. I am ready prepared and armed for abuse of every sort and kind: but not to be read! No matter! If this happens, it will be entirely Stockdale's fault, for not enlivening the work with pretty pictures as I have suggested to him, and certainly cannot, by the most remote possibility, be owing to any demerit of mine!

Above all, I wanted Wellington to be exhibited, dripping with wet, standing opposite my street-door at midnight, bawling up to Argyle, who should be representing my old Abigail, from my bed-room window. Good gracious! I quite forgot to tell this adventure! How could I be so ridiculous and negligent? Never mind, you shall have it now—But there is poor Fred Lamb waiting all this time, in my select library! I can't help it—There's no getting on with Fred Lamb. I never could use him to any purpose in all my life; and yet there's matter enough in him too! What matters that? Let it stand over, or let it pass. Fred Lamb can read Zimmerman, which he will find among my books. It will teach him to love solitude and to profit by it, while my readers amuse themselves with the interesting adventure which happened on the very night of Wellington's arrival from Spain, and which I beg a thousand pardons for not having made them acquainted with in due order and proper time.

"Good news! Glorious news! Who calls?" said Master Puff, the newsman.—Not that anybody called the least in the world; but Wellington was really said to have won a mighty battle and was hourly expected. Cannons were fired and much tallow consumed in illumination. His Grace of Argyle came

to me earlier than usual on that memorable evening; but, being unwell and love-sick, he found me in my bed-chamber.

"*Quelle bizarre idée vous passe par la tête?*" said I. "Surely you have forgotten the amiable duchess, his bride, and all the fatigue His Grace encountered, enough to damp the ardour of any mighty hero or plenipotentiary, for one evening at any rate; therefore, trust me, Wellington will not disturb us to night."

At this very moment a thundering rap at the door was heard.

"*Vive l'amour! Vive la guerre,*" said Argyle—"*Le voila!*" And hastily throwing my dressing-gown over his shoulders, and putting on one of my old night-caps, having previously desired "the most particlerst man as is" not to let anybody in, hastily put his head out of my bedroom window, which was on the second floor, and soon recognised the noble chieftain, Wellington! Endeavouring to imitate the voice of an old duenna, Argyle begged to know who was at the door.

"Come down I say," roared this modern Blue Beard, "and don't keep me here in the rain, you old blockhead."

"Sir," answered Argyle, in a shrill voice, "you must please to call your name, or I don't dare to come down, robberies are so frequent in London just at this season, and all the sojers, you see, coming home from Spain, that it's quite alarming to poor lone women."

Wellington took off his hat, and held up towards the lamp a visage, which late fatigue and present vexation had rendered no bad representation of that of the knight of the woeful figure. While the rain was trickling down his nose, his voice, trembling with rage and impatience, cried out, "You old idiot, do you know me now?"

"Lord, sir," answered Argyle, anxious to prolong this ridiculous scene, "I can't give no guess; and do you know sir, the thieves have stolen a new water-

butt out of our airy, not a week since, and my missis is more timbersome than ever!"

"The devil!" vociferated Wellington, who could endure no more, and, muttering bitter imprecations between his closed teeth against all the duennas and old women that had ever existed, returned home to his neglected wife and family duties.

That's all!

But I am digressing from Fred Lamb! What is to be done? unless he turn freemason, and tie me to his apron-strings! I wish I had let him alone instead of handing him into my library; he is quite a weight on my mind! Perhaps the reader will allow me to cut the subject where it stands? But I should like to tell them about *The Cock* at Sutton, too.

Of course, you all know *The Cock* at Sutton? or, lest any lady or gentleman should be so deficient in tact, so behindhand in topographical knowledge, so unacquainted with public characters, suppose I just mention that the celebrated athletic Jackson, the gentleman bruiser and prize-fighter, once shouldered and insinuated himself into the good graces of the fair widow who kept *The Cock* at Sutton, which afterwards became his for several years by right of marriage and rights of a landlord; hence its celebrity.

However, the story I have to relate, has nothing to do with Jackson, else I could about it straight: but there is a fatality attending on Fred Lamb, and, though I am bored to death with him, I don't like to miss telling you the story of *The Cock* at Sutton! and so—here goes, to use mad Dr. Robertson's elegant expression.

I could only get Fred Lamb out of my library, by promising him that we certainly should meet once more, if only to sign and seal my forgiveness of his former violence.

"Well then," said Frederick at last, "I shall come up from Brocket Hall the day after to-morrow, and I will call on you on my way to town, and, if you do not desire and wish to see me, order your servant not

to let me in; for I should be very sorry of forcing your inclinations a second time."

The next day, being of course deeply affected with Fred Lamb's absence, I went to call on Julia, *pour me distraire.*

"But where is your story of *The Cock* at Sutton?" the reader inquires.

I am coming to that by-and-by.

Julia's spirits appeared much improved since my last visit to her. "I see very well by your altered look," said I, "that Sir H. Mildmay has been paying you a visit."

"True," answered Julia with a deep sigh, which almost resembled a groan;" but I see very plainly that he is tired of me."

"My poor forlorn woman," I replied, "for God's sake, recollect you are a mother! Whoever forgets that is less than human. Think of your poor, dear, beautiful children. It is wrong perhaps to intrigue under any circumstances, yet somebody who was wise, or who passed for wise, has said that there are exceptions to every rule. Mr. Napier is rich and free. I think that it depends on you to provide for your children. Consider, my dear Julia," I continued, taking her hand; and I saw a tear glisten in her eye.

"When do you expect Mr. Napier?" I asked.

"The long-backed odious creature will call here to-morrow," answered Julia.

"I wish something else could be done," said I hastily, sympathising in her disgust. "Shall I write to your uncle, Lord Carysfort?"

"Do not mention that unfeeling wretch!" exclaimed Julia. "A legacy has been left me, which I cannot help thinking has been unfairly appropriated."

"Have you applied to his lordship on that subject?" I inquired.

"I have written to him twice," answered Julia, "and my second letter was answered by his lordship in these words, 'The person from whom you expected a legacy showed a becoming horror and disgust at

your vile profligate conduct by withdrawing your name from his will.'"

"Rely on it," said I, "that honourable uncle of yours has taken due care of your property. But what can be expected from one thus destitute of every manly feeling of compassion towards a poor, fallen, defenceless relative!"

Julia absolutely sobbed aloud. I never saw her thus affected; for she was not given to the melting mood. To change the conversation, I asked her what had become of another noble relative.

"He has paid nearly a thousand pounds for me, and declares he can do no more," replied Julia.

"No matter," said I, "Napier is your man."

"But Napier's vanity makes me sick," retorted Julia impatiently. "The possession of my person would not satisfy him. He wants me to declare and prove that I love him; and the thing is physically impossible."

I thought of Fred Lamb and was silent.

"What has become of Amy and Argyle?" I asked, after a pause.

"Amy," said Julia, "is very proud of Argyle and also of her pregnancy, and lives in hopes that her unborn babe by the Scottish laws may yet be Duke of Argyle."

"She has bespoken a boy then?"

"Of that too she lives in hopes," repeated Julia.

"And the Duke," inquired I, with something like a sickness of the heart," is he as tender and as loving as ever?"

"I have heard nothing to the contrary," answered Julia.

I was not jealous, but disgusted. I had always wished to love my sisters dearly. It was very hard on me that they would not let me!

"If," said Julia, "I were to consent to Napier's wishes, and he did not provide for my children, I should go into the Serpentine River the very next instant."

"Here is a fuss about trifles," said I. "Why cannot we take these things as the Frenchwomen do? *Ça lui fait tant de plaisir! pendant que ça me coûte si peu!* That is the way they argue, and very philosophically too. Your sin has been bringing all these children into the world; and now, *coute qu'il coûte*, you must provide for them, to the extent of your power." I concluded here my very moral advice, and took my leave, promising to join her in our Opera-box on the morrow evening.

The next morning Mildmay called on me. He reproached me with having deceived and made a fool of him; but all he could say or do could not effect any change of my sentiments in his favour.

He had also professed to love Julia once, and how had he requited her? "Heaven defend me from the like humiliation," thought I, "which I should richly deserve, were I to encourage this cold-hearted, profligate, beautiful Sir Henry."

As soon as I contrived to get rid of him and had dined, I went to join Julia at the Opera House. The first man who came into my box was Fred Lamb; he appeared delighted to see me.

"When did you come to town?" I asked.

"This morning," Fred answered, "and I called on you; but you were either out or denied to me."

"I passed the morning in my little library," answered I.

"You have made me very wretched," whispered Fred Lamb, pressing my hand with much passionate agitation. He looked remarkably well.

"Indeed, Fred," said I, "I did not mean it."

"Remember your promise then," added Fred Lamb, "and do pray, dearest Harry, tell me, when you will throw away two whole days on me in the country."

"What shall we do there?'

"Get married," interposed Julia.

"Married!" exclaimed Fred Lamb. "From my heart and soul, I shall pity the man who ever hopes

to attach you, Harriette, to himself. You have the knack of torturing those who love you, beyond the possibility of endurance! Why not have told me at once that you did not mean to receive me?"

"I meant well," answered I, sighing; for it never gave me any pleasure to be loved by those whose love I could not return.

"Had you been my wife, by heavens, I should have murdered you long ago," said Fred Lamb, half seriously.

"Why, yes," I replied, "I think, as yet, you had better not venture on me; but really, Fred, on the day I turn fifty I propose being steady, and then, perhaps——"

"No," said Fred Lamb, "not a bit of it. You would only then, as now, be one day grateful for attentions and the next confess that you were sorry, advise one not to fret for a woman of fifty; but declare you had changed your mind."

"If this is really my character, and you imagine I should act thus for ever towards every man, how can you be so very weak as to like me?"

Lord Molyneux came into my box at this instant. I always made it a point to make violent love to Lord Molyneux, for the same reason that I used to say soft things to Luttrell: because they neither of them professed the least love to me.

"I wish all the young men would dress as you do," said I to his lordship. "That dear, little, gentleman-like bow, on the little, *vielle cour*, three-cornered hat! How quiet and interesting compared to the vile, gold-laced, dragoon-looking flat thing Lord Uxbridge carries under his arm!"

"What you say is most highly flattering," said Lord Molyneux, with good-natured composure.

"And then, white silk stockings always win my heart, no matter who wears them. In short, your lordship is better dressed, and better adapted altogether to set off a woman's opera-box than Brummell, Lord

Jersey, or any man I know ; and, if I could only have ensured to myself the honour of a visit from you every night, I should not have put myself to the expense of ten pounds for these new red curtains."

Lord Molyneux said that he was sure I ought to give him credit for the gentleness of his disposition and the unheard-of patience with which he stood there to be quizzed and laughed at ; and yet, added Molyneux, "Though this is invariably what happens to me, your box altogether has attractions one cannot resist."

"All nonsense," said I. "I am no longer to be put off in this manner, I, who am stark staring mad for you!"

"I am off," said Fred Lamb.

Julia, who greatly admired him, as well as the character I had given her of him, entreated him to remain.

"You have not settled your rural excursion with Harriette yet," Julia told him.

"Oh, true! where is it to be?" I was obliged to ask ; because Fred looked in such a passion with me.

"Would you like Richmond?" Fred inquired.

"Oh, no!" I answered. "Sophia and I dined there a short time ago, and—variety, you know, my dear Fred Lamb, is everything, even at fifty years of age!"

"Go to *The Cock* at Sutton," said Berkely Craven, who had joined us. "It is a delightful, pretty, rural place for a man to read rhymes, and be romantic in ; just fit for you, Fred."

"Are you ever taken with either a fit of reading, or a fit of romance, Berkely?"

"Ask my young nephew here, who can tell you how I used to sit, and sigh, and drink brandy and water with Mrs. Patten after the play," answered Berkely.

"So much for your romance!" said I.

"And, as to reading," continued Berkely, "I will

be bound to say, that, among men who have received no regular education, not one has read more plays and farces than I have; and I always read the newspaper from beginning to end, except the debates."

The Duc de Berri next came in; and we all stood up till he was seated, as bound by etiquette; and then followed my young, new acquaintance, the Duke of Leinster, who stood up by himself, like a noun substantive, for want of a chair.

Now the said Duke of Leinster being a very stingy, stupid blockhead, whom nobody knows, I will describe him. His person was pretty good; strait, stout, and middle-sized, with a good, fair, Irish allowance of leg. It was a good leg, however, *mais en gros;* and I never saw anything more decided in the shape of curls than those which adorned and distinguished Leinster's crop from all such heads of hair as are in the habit of resisting the curling tongs, when they do not happen to be red hot: *c'etait, enfin, une belle tête.*

I do not see how a man could be well handsomer, without a mind. His Grace was at that time in the constant habit of assenting to whatever anybody said, good or bad. He was all smiles and sweet good-humour. He would, in fact, have made an excellent husband for Sophia; yet, strange to say, he felt not the slightest inclination towards her; but Leinster is not the first fool I have met with who required wit and talent in a mistress.

"How did your Grace's party on the river go off this morning?" I asked.

"Oh, it was charming," answered the duke; with more of the brogue than was necessary, for a lad who had been bred at Eton. "But, upon my honour," added Leinster, "the English are too stiff and abominable, for just as I had stripped and began to row they hallooed out, 'Wait for His Grace! where's His Grace? where's the Duke of Leinster?'"—as if His Grace, who happens to be a mere wild Irish boy of nineteen, was not allowed to amuse himself in the same way that other lads do. "I question if

they did not expect to see me in a bag-wig," added Leinster.

Lord Molyneux waited to catch my eye and kiss his hand as he made his exit.

"You are driving away the *vielle cour* by expressing those vulgar ideas."

"I cannot help it," replied Leinster. "God Almighty has not cut me out for a fine gentleman."

"One word," said Fred Lamb, "and I am off, to make room for better men."

"I really will," I interrupted him in a whisper, not knowing how else to get rid of him, "I really will drive down to *The Cock* at Sutton to-morrow morning at about twelve, and inquire for you."

Fred Lamb's eyes brightened. "Swear it upon your honour and soul," said he, seizing my hand.

"I do swear," I rejoined.

He pressed his lips on the hand he held, in fervent gratitude, as he took his leave.

"I knew I should find my noble cousin the big duke here," said the young handsome Harry De Roos, peeping his Narcissus-like head into my box.

"Come in, you pretty Harry," said I.

"Oh! I am very melancholy," observed De Roos, blushing, as he took his seat.

"Upon my honour," said Leinster, "Henry is fretting for nothing at all. Wait now, while I tell you all about it."

"Indeed, and we are waiting," I answered.

"Why," Leinster went on, "his mother, my Lady De Roos, is going to send him down to a private tutor to-morrow, and I have frightened him with my description of the Smiths, that's all."

"Who are the Smiths?" I asked.

"Mr. Smith is the name of the big duke's tutor, whom he has just left," answered De Roos, "after enduring such wretchedness, for more than two years, as would have about finished me, I am sure."

"Nothing at all like wretchedness, upon my

honour," retorted Leinster. "It is all Harry's spoiled way."

"Tell us, you big duke, how you used to pass your valuable time at this said bugbear of a tutor, Mr. Smith's," said I.

"Listen while I tell you then," replied Leinster. "Myself and two other lads were under his care. We rose at six and cleaned our own boots and shoes."

De Roos looked on his peculiarly delicate white hand and fingers and sighed heavily.

"And then," proceeded Leinster, "we took our breakfast, which consisted of thick slices of bread with a little salt butter. After that we had three large books placed before us, in which we were desired to read for five hours, taking down notes of whatever struck us most forcibly. At dinner, which consisted one day of a roast joint, the next of the same, hashed; the third, ditto, minced; our society was enlivened by the three Miss Smiths!"

"What sort of animals were they?" inquired Julia, laughing.

"The eldest, Miss Jemima, wore a sort of a false rump, sticking out so," and Leinster put himself into a most ludicrous attitude.

To my question, whether she was pretty, he answered, that her face was a little too much like a dead horse for a perfect beauty.

"Gorgons, all three of them, and the youngest turned of thirty," said De Roos, with a heavy groan.

"But then," interrupted Julia, "Mr. De Roos is not going to live with Mr. Smith."

"True," continued De Roos, "and, surely, there cannot be another such a vile place in the world take it all together, cleaning boots, and the Miss Smiths, and all?"

"No," I answered, "you must hope the best, and recollect that merely being minus the Miss Smiths is something."

"Thank God, I have done with private tutors!" said Leinster.

"How do you like Oxford?" asked Julia.

"Delighted with it," replied the Duke. "Apropos of Christ Church. Do you know that Brummell is cut amongst us, and who do you think sets the fashions there now?"

"Yourself, perhaps?"

"No, nothing is asked, but whether Harriette Wilson approves of this or that? Harriette likes white waistcoats—Harriette commends silk stockings, &c. I asked my friend, the young Marquis of Worcester, why he did not curl his straight locks. 'Harriette considers straight hair most gentleman-like.'

"On my asking him if he knew Harriette, the marquis owned that he had never seen her, adding, 'I ran up three times to the Opera, on purpose; but she did not make her appearance. Will you present me to her? I shall be much indebted to you.'

"'Not I, indeed, upon my honour,' was my answer, and I am the only young man at Oxford acquainted with you."

Young Lambton, the little curly-headed Opposition man, second son of Lady Ann Wyndham, now interrupted us. The Duc de Berri, who had been all attention to Julia, arose to depart, and we all stood up to bow him out, with the selfsame ceremony with which we bowed him in. As to Berkely Craven he had found his way out unobserved by us long before.

Lambton had been, for the last three weeks, trying to muster courage to express his passion, and Leinster, observing his anxiety to say soft things in my ear, took his hat to depart, first declaring that he should hold himself in readiness in the round room to see me safe to my carriage. Harry De Roos, as he followed his cousin, begged us to pity him, and convey his tender regards to Sophia.

Next came Napier, who, with his usual ill-breeding, began to whisper in Julia's ear. However, I would have put up with more than that to have been of use to her.

Lord Kinnaird paid me a sort of flying visit; but, seeing Napier so deeply engaged on one side and Lambton so tender on the other, he had the impudence to whisper in my ear, "*Mademoiselle Harriette, il ne faut pas le corrompre*," and then left us.

His lordship was overheard by Lambton, who began to fidget about and redden, and appear very uneasy.

"What is the matter, Mr. Lambton?" asked Julia.

"I am not much of a Frenchman," muttered Lambton; "but I perfectly understood what Lord Kinnaird said, and I think it was extremely impertinent."

Lambton's particular friend, the Honourable Thomas Dundas, now joined us. I immediately related this mighty affair to him.

Lambton declared that, whatever his appearance might be, he had no idea of being treated like a child by any man, seeing that he was of age.

"Yes," interrupted I, "of age to be wiser than to take offence where, very evidently, no offence was meant. Lord Kinnaird only knows you by sight."

"The less reason for his taking such a liberty," answered the little man, with much impatient dignity.

While Dundas was endeavouring to calm his irritated friend, the curtain dropped, and the Duke of Leinster hurried upstairs to be in time to conduct me into the round room. Dundas and Lambton followed us, the latter still grumbling and very sulky.

Lord Kinnaird passed us again, and nodded good-naturedly as he chaperoned some ladies to their carriage. Lambton spoke loudly at him as he passed, saying he did not consider himself a subject for ridi-

cule, or in danger of being corrupted, or young enough to endure the accusation.

Lord Kinnaird heard nothing as applied to himself, never having dreamed of such a thing as insulting or picking a quarrel with young Lambton. This both I and Mr. Dundas took pains to impress on his mind; but the peevish, fretful creature refused to hear reason.

Again his lordship passed us, and again Lambton growled at him, with his eyes fixed on his own well-blacked shoes.

It was now my turn to lose my patience.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "is this what you Opposition gentlemen call spirit, growling at a man between your teeth for an imagined insult? Why growl or be sulky if nobody has offered you any insult? And if they have, why do you not address them with firm, manly civility, to request an explanation or apology?"

Having thus brought my little spitfire gentleman to a point, he soon contrived to pocket his supposed wrongs, since challenging had been hinted at by me as his alternative, and went home without touching on the subject to Lord Kinnaird.

I do not exactly know what these young Lambtons are good for except sulkiness. I remember hearing the officers of the old 10th Dragoons, to which regiment the eldest Lambton had formerly belonged, declare that he had contrived so to prejudice the whole regiment against him, that there was no rest for himself or his brother officers till he left it. I do not mean absolutely to assert by this that there really is no good about either of the Lambtons, being in the first place an incompetent judge of their merits, from having only a slight acquaintance with the youngest, and, in the second, it being my intention to draw my characters with truth and nature, I should be very sorry to caricature them. I will tell you why—but this is a secret,—I do not like them well enough to tell you a single untruth, to their prejudice, and

thereby to shake your faith in such facts as else would tell against them. In common justice to my own heart I must add that I yet like even my enemies, and those who have used me worst, too well to desire that you should believe them worse than they really are.

CHAPTER XII

WHAT I have stated and mean to state hereafter I will abide by and swear to; and let them deny it if they can. I allude to all such facts as might be likely to prejudice my reader against any individual. As to mere harmless conversations, I do not profess more than general accuracy; I often add a yes, a nod, or a no, or I neglect my dates and relate anecdotes together which happened at different periods; but happen they did; and no conversation is described herein which did not take place within my own knowledge, and, for the most part, in my own hearing.

In regard to the Lambtons, I have related all I ever heard or knew of them, good or bad; and, judging of the youngest, from my slight observation, never having conversed with him for an hour together in my life, I should pronounce him well read; rather sensible; not one bit witty; touchy, sulky, proud, and overbearing: but, having yet the fear of God always before him, he prefers growling to duelling, as in duty bound. So much I guess; yet, being uncertain as to what relates to his religious principles I beg that all his friends will consider him as bold as a lion, until he shall himself have proved to them the contrary.

To proceed, I refused to permit the Duke of Leinster to accompany me home, although he declared himself ready to mount the box, or to stand behind with my dapper little footman! I was out of sorts and out of spirits at the idea of having promised to meet Frederick Lamb at *The Cock* at Sutton on the follow-

ing morning. Oh, this tiresome Fred Lamb! I wonder if any woman alive was ever in love with him, with the exception of the once celebrated Charlotte Windham: who would have taken him into keeping, at least so I have heard, and found him in washing, tea, sugar, and raw eggs to the end of his natural life, had he not cut her dead, *pour mes propres beaux yeux.* Handsome, clever, young, a great plenipo, and the recorded son of the Earl of Melbourne! What would ladies be at? "*On ne connait pas toujours son père, c'est un malheur; on est sûr, cependant, d'en avoir eu un, cela console!*" as says Pigault Le Brun.

Fred Lamb certainly had a father and, in my conscience, I believe him to have been a man of high rank, no matter whether he was a lord, a duke, or a prince, and, what is more, his mother was a married woman: and yet, notwithstanding these multifarious advantages of both, I looked forward with disgust to the idea of meeting him at *The Cock* at Sutton. How could I be so deficient in good taste?

I found two letters on my dressing-table; the first I took up was in my young nephew's well-known round text. I knew that he would not write, unless he wanted money or clothes, whips or cricket-bats, and, as I happened to be very poor, I did not venture to break the seal, till I had examined the other letter in search of consolation. It was addressed in an unknown, and I fancied, disguised hand. I hastily broke open the plain wafer seal, and found a two hundred pound bank-note, merely enclosed in a blank cover. "Charming correspondent," said I, "how eloquent is thy silence!"

"It is very clear," continued I to myself, "that there is a providence, which is kind enough to take particular care of me; for I have only to spend my last shilling to ensure to myself a full purse, which comes to me nobody knows how." I was at loss to guess at the munificent being who could find pleasure in thus secretly disposing of so large a sum without

even the chance of being thanked for it. "It must be Lord Ponsonby," thought I, and, strange to say, the idea gave me pain instead of pleasure. I would rather have been indebted to any man's goodness than his. It was a relief to my mind to believe him heartless and unworthy of my affection.

To change the current of my thoughts I opened my young nephew's letter, which also contained an enclosure, in the shape of a little dirty note directed to William Halliday, my footman.

The letter to me was as follows:

"My Dear Aunt,—I hope you are well, as this leaves me at present. Excuse this bad writing as I am so very bad, and my head aches fit to split, but I am ordered this very moment, before the post goes out, to acquaint you with my accident, as Monsieur Codroie says, perhaps, you may wish me to come to town, to have the rest of my teeth put to rights, the fact is then, to be short, dear Aunt, I was running just now, and I hit my face against another boy's head, and broke out my two front teeth,

"Your affectionate Niece,

"George Woodcock.

"P.S.—Pray deliver the enclosed to William, in answer to a long stupid sermon he has written to me about five shillings he says I borrowed of him."

George's enclosure was merely poor William's laboured epistle turned inside out, with these eloquent words written near the seal,—

"Five and four makes nine,
Mind your business, and I'll mind mine."

"*Vive la poésie!*" said I, throwing the letter aside, and ringing for my *femme de chambre*, whom I desired to prepare for my journey to *The Cock* at Sutton on the following morning.

I did not awake till twelve o'clock, when I rang my bell.

"Madame, *la voiture est à la porte*," said my French maid, as she entered my bedroom.

"I cannot help it; so bring me a cup of chocolate, *pour me donner du courage*," I replied.

Before I had finished it, the Duke of Leinster was announced, and I went down to him in my dressing-gown and slippers.

"Upon my honour," said His Grace, "I am very glad you did not keep your appointment with Fred Lamb. I have brought little George some strings to mend his fiddle with and, if you will give it me, I will string it for him."

I rang for the fiddle, and Leinster set to work in great glee.

"How did you get home last night?" I asked.

"Oh," said Leinster, "my brother Fitzgerald has found out such a woman! Upon my honour I never laughed so much in all my life. He told me she was Venus herself, just emerged from the froth of the sea! I wanted to go home and think of you; but Fitzgerald dragged me by force to No. 2 Upper Norton-street. We were shown into a parlour by an old, dirty duenna, who assured us her mistress was engaged, and she regretted it of all things.

"'Good gracious!' said I, 'Fitz, you are not going to wait?'

"'Yes,' said my brother, mysteriously; 'she is in keeping, and has been these five years. I shall ruin her if I am found here, so pray be quiet. The gentleman who keeps her is a captain of horse-marines.'

"'For God's sake, let me be off,' said I, making the best of my way to the door. 'I can stand a lick or two as well as most lads of my age and country; but, being in love elsewhere, and not quite come to my strength, I do not feel much inclined to encounter this horse-marine to-night.' However, Fitzgerald overruled all my objections and kept me there in perfect misery for more than half an hour. At last, we heard the creaking of heavy boots descending the stairs. I scarcely ventured to breathe, expecting

every minute to be called to account by the horse-marine, for being found concealed on his premises at past two in the morning.

"Upon my honour, I did not half like it! and only just fancy my horror when, instead of going out at the street door as we both expected, this much-dreaded horse-marine strutted into the parlour in search of his hat! He did not look much like a horse-marine, but reminded me more of a city hosier. Nevertheless, I made myself as small as possible, and strove to hide behind the scanty, red window-curtain. As to Fitzgerald, believing that all was lost, he became bold from desperation and, folding his arms across his breast, he fixed his eyes steadily on his rival. The horse-marine, who had entered with the sort of strut which became a commander-in-chief of No. 2 Upper Norton Street, started back, instead of encountering my brother's fixed regard, and began to stammer out an apology. He had just taken the liberty of seeing the lady home safe from the Opera; he begged pardon if it had been wrong, he was sure no harm nor disrespect was meant, &c.

"By this time my brother, who, I assure you, is by no means such a fool as I am, saw exactly how the case stood, and that the horse-marine was but the creature of his fair mistress's imagination, a sort of circular bug-bear by which she contrived to frighten all her lovers, while she flattered their vanity with the idea that her acquaintance was an unusual *bonne fortune*, which their peculiar merits alone had obtained for them. This conviction being impressed on my brother's mind, he interrupted his rival in the midst of his humble apologies by playing himself, for that night only, the character of the terrific horse-marine! And, waving his hand with much pomp towards the door, as he fixed his back against the fireplace, said, 'No offence, my good fellow, no offence! only, there is the door you know, and, unless you prefer making your exit by the window, never let me see your rascally, ugly face in this house again!'

"Upon my honour," continued Leinster, "I could not stand it any longer, and, before the poor trembling wretch got to the street door, we both broke out into a roar of laughter, which was interrupted by the entrance of the frail fair one herself, whom my brother immediately accosted thus:

"'Fair lady, since I have been allowed to make so very valuable an acquaintance as that of your horse-marine, my conscience will not permit me to interfere with his happiness:' and we hastened out of the house before the lady could recover from her confusion and surprise."

"Now, duke," said I, "there's the door," placing myself before the fire, and pointing to it in humble imitation of Fitzgerald.

Leinster took this gentle, delicate hint, with much good-nature, and left me at about two o'clock. I felt really ashamed of myself and, hurrying on my travelling dress, was soon with my maid, on our road to *The Cock* at Sutton. Fred Lamb was waiting at the door, and his joy, on perceiving my carriage, overcame all his late vexation.

"I shall be nicely quizzed and laughed at," said Fred Lamb. "Harry Wyndham and Lord Egremont alighted here this morning, on their road to his lordship's house at Brighton. They asked me so many questions as to where I was going, that I was obliged to confess I was waiting for somebody to meet me. They remained with me an hour. 'Why you will not wait any longer, surely,' said Harry! 'Who can the cruel fair one be?' It was too bad of you."

"Well, do not scold," I answered, "for I could not help it."

Fred Lamb had a book in his pocket, and he read to me in the garden while our dinner was preparing. His remarks on the fine poem he read were very sensible; but his manner of reading, like that of his brother William, I dislike: it might rather be called singing; and yet some say it is proper, and all admit it to be the fashion to read so.

We had an excellent dinner and, as long as I saw daylight, I kept in pretty good spirits; but when the waiter brought us candles, and we seemed as though settled for the night at *The Cock* at Sutton, my heart completely failed me. I tried hard to reason myself out of this repugnance. I argued with myself that, since I had already been under Frederick's protection, one night more or less could not make much difference,—that to leave him now were to treat him really ill and make, perhaps, a bitter enemy of a man well disposed towards me: but all would not do. "I cannot help it," said I to myself, in a sort of frenzy, "I would rather die than pass another whole night with Fred Lamb, now the thing is gone by and I have been so attached to another." My case was desperate; for I almost equally dreaded telling Lamb I would not stay with him.

"Fred Lamb," said I, at last, absolutely pale with terror," I really must return to town to night. Do not ask me why, for you may be sure, if I wished to stay, I should not go, and, if I do not, my society cannot be worth having, to a man of taste, who can easily make himself beloved and desired by more likeable objects than I am. You will, I know, have a right to reproach me with caprice, because my good heart made me wish to avoid the appearance of unkindness towards an old friend; *mais vous savez bien que les passions ne se commandent pas.*"

Fred Lamb on this occasion behaved very well and very gentlemanlike, much as his pride and feelings were hurt. He ordered out my carriage and accompanied me home with friendly politeness, nor did he make a single unpleasant observation on my refusal to remain there.

The favourite topic on my arrival in town was the Marquis of Anglesea's elopement with the wife of Sir Henry Wellesley. His Grace of Argyle was soon expected to console Lady Anglesea by the offer of his hand and heart, in case that good lady could contrive

THE MARQUIS OF ANGLESEY

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by hook or by crook, by English law, or by Scotch law, to obtain her liberty.

Amy Madden, *alias* Sydenham, *alias* Argyle, had long been led to believe, according to her own account, that she was to become the legitimate wife of the Duke of Argyle. At last, when Amy was very near her confinement, Argyle, fearful least the sad truth might fall heavier on her tender heart from a third person than from his own lips, one fine morning, after breakfast, having no doubt previously fortified himself with a bumper of brandy, for Amy was a practical Tartar, opened to her with the utmost delicacy he was master of, the appalling fact that he was about to marry Lady Anglesea.

Amy had a hysterical fit, or was afflicted with sore eyes, I forget which; but I know that she was very bad and vented her rage in all the refined expressions usual on these most celebrated occasions. It will scarcely be expected that I should feel much commiseration for her. When I state these facts it must be understood that Amy said so; but then, will methodistical Luttrell add, with his eyes turned up towards the sky, or the ceiling, as the chance may be—if all the lies that have been uttered since the flood were put into a scale with Amy's, they would weigh as a hair in the balance; so that, perhaps, the less I say on this matter the better.

At last, when a whole month had elapsed beyond the period Amy had named for the expected event, Argyle could keep on the mask no longer; and, having asked her one evening how she felt, and received for answer that she was perfectly well and free from pain, he said, in a passion, "Why, Amy, you are surely a Johanna Southcott, and never mean to be confined at all." This was certainly very cruel, though no less certainly circumstances did rather appear to justify such a suspicion!

At last, oh, blessed news for Argyle! Amy declared she felt a slight pain; but whether it proceeded from the sweet pledge of love she carried in her

bosom or from what else was time to determine: and my kind readers will probably recollect that, in a like protracted case, Old Time determined against the late Marchioness of Buckingham, without the least respect to all the splendid paraphernalia which had been profusely got up for the anticipated joyful occasion. Amy, however, not being quite so stricken in years, Argyle bustled about in the joyful hopes of a speedy deliverance, and said, "No harm in sending to Dr. Merriman, and getting the knocker tied up, and a little straw laid before the door?" As to the nurse, she had been in the house for the last month!

By the time the knocker was tied up, the straw laid down, and Dr. Merriman shown upstairs into her room, Amy declared herself quite well again, and so she continued for another week.

"Good Lord deliver us!" exclaimed Argyle.

"Amen!" responded the old nurse: for who would differ from a duke, however pleasant it might be to enjoy present pay and good quarters for doing nothing!

I cannot help pitying anything in labour, even a mountain! At length, Amy herself really experienced the so often anticipated pains. She now declared that she could not stand it, and would not, that was more!

"Give me a pair of scissors!" said she in a fury to the doctor, "and I will cut my own throat directly."

Dr. Merriman answered with perfect *sang froid.*

Apropos! I do remember this said Dr. Merriman of Curzon-street, an apothecary, and often has he stood behind his uncle's counter to serve me when I was a child and fond of sweets, with a pennyworth of Spanish liquorice. His father was a respectable accoucheur and had the honour to bring all my respectable family into this respectable world, one by one, except my youngest sister Julia; and he would have done as much by her, but that he happened to die one day, and the present Dr. Merriman, his nephew, formerly well known by the appellation of Sam Merriman, officiated, *faute de mieux*, my dear mother being too shy to endure the idea of a perfect stranger.

As soon as he got possession of his dead uncle's carriage he took the small liberty of cutting the shop, Spanish liquorice and all, and ventured to change the name of Sam for the more dignified one of Doctor, but it would not pass current everywhere. Many refused to pay a fee, and voted him *ignorantus, ignoranta, ignorantum!* and so Sam, *à force de battre le fer*, contrived to take out a degree, and became Dr. Merriman indeed, at any lady's service.

"My dear Lady," said the doctor to Amy, in answer to her request for a pair of scissors to cut her own throat, "my dear lady, I should be happy to oblige you, if you could first insure my own neck": and then, turning to the nurse as he warmed his hands by the fire, "I always let them halloa, and make just as much noise as they like; but, for myself, as it will be necessary for me to pass the night here, I shall thank you to give me some warm blankets on that sofa; with a cup of tea and a bottle of wine."

In due season, the gentle Amy was delivered of a fine boy, by my old friend Sam Merriman, and was duly announced to be as well as could be expected. For another fortnight, Amy contrived to keep Argyle in London, as might be supposed to his no small annoyance, just on the eve of his approaching nuptials with Lady Anglesea. The time however did arrive when His Grace took his departure northward, to the destruction of all the airy visions which had long flitted before the anxious eyes of Amy, who had adorned them with ducal coronets and almost every other attribute of a resolutely, ambitious and selfish mind. She declared that her death must be perfectly an event of course; yet she got up in a month, as blooming and well as she had ever been in her life. It is true she worked herself up into a dreadful frenzy of passion, when anybody told her that the Duchess of Argyle was, or would soon be, in the way which all ladies who love their lords wish to be in; but she was easily consoled by adding a few years to Her

Grace's age, or detracting from the duchess's charms, personal or mental.

Enough of Amy. I hate to dwell long on any subject, unless indeed it were the merits of these my most interesting and valuable memoirs! which I assure you might have been better still—but that Stockdale won't let me or any one else study and correct them. "The merits of such a light work as this," stupidly says he, "is, that it is written without study, and naturally, and just as you converse. There are learned books enough, and more than people are aware of, all written with such correct precision, as to defy the Edinburgh Reviewers themselves! and yet half of them do not take the trouble, although months have been spent in poring over heavy volumes, to secure the accuracy of a single date! This research is highly creditable in its way; but, since the world, in their rage for variety, require a little of everything, write you in your own natural language, and of life, manners, and men as they strike you, and, take my word for it, your own genuine spirit will please and the book will sell." So here am I, seated on an easy chair at No. 111, in the Rue de Faubourg St. Honoré à Paris, writing, not for the benefit of my readers, but for my own amusement and profit to boot, and in the full expectation that my work is to pass the twentieth edition! Apropos, I have just got a letter from Stockdale, who tells me he has hopes, even beyond what he at first anticipated, as to the success of my Memoirs: but then he consents to observe my directions as to the pretty pictures; which he says shall certainly adorn the work before it gets to the conclusion.

Love me, love my dog!

"Apropos to what?" says the reader.

I really don't know. I have had my head leaning on my finger, which is my usual attitude, as you see me in the portrait, for the last three minutes, after I had finished the word edition, considering what was to be my next subject.

I yesterday dined with a lady, who assured me that

it often cost her an hour to begin a letter; but, having once decided on the first five or six words, she could scribble on till doomsday.

"I'll put anything down," said I to myself, "just now, if only to try my fortune in that way," and, looking towards my window, from which I have a full view of everybody who passes in the Faubourg St. Honoré, I saw a thin *ancien régime*-looking, powdered Frenchman, in a threadbare coat and a pair of yellow old silk stockings, which showed to much disadvantage what, I suppose, he calls *les beaux restes* of his calves.

"It is rakish and interesting," says Lord Foley, "to have a thin leg; but you must never admit that you were not born with a large calf, while you declare that your high breeding has left you only, *les beaux restes.*"

However, to proceed with my Frenchman in the threadbare coat, who just now stopped near my window to take off his hat to an opulent-looking man with a large, black dog.

"What sort of a man is an opulent-looking man?" perhaps the reader may inquisitively ask, and particularly if he should happen to belong to that fraternity vulgarly called blacklegs.

Why gentlemen, if you will take off your dreadful Thurtell-looking, white great-coats, and sit down quietly, and not frighten one, I will tell you.

I generally guess to be opulent, a man who, being vulgar, and with the air and manners of low birth, appears not at all proud of a new coat, which he wears not well brushed, and a chain of value, which is not dragged too forward; and generally appears discontented with whatever poor men are most apt to admire. He likewise makes a particular sort of bow; putting on his hat always less ceremoniously than he had taken it off to salute you, as though, on second thoughts, it had scarcely been worth his while. All these, my favourite marks, had the man whom the thin old beau just now saluted with such profound respect.

The supposed opulent man apparently, to the great surprise and delight of the poor one, made a full stop, and addressed him.—While they were conversing, the large, black, dirty dog, jumped on his hind legs, and began playing with the thin old beau, covering him with mud. Instead of driving the nasty animal away in anger as I fully expected, he caressed and patted him, as though quite enchanted. The opulent man, whose frightful dog I should imagine had never before been tolerated, appeared all gratitude and respect for him who saw his qualities with the same partial eyes that he did himself.

"Love me, love my dog," said I to myself, and, trusting to providence for what was to follow, I put the words down in my manuscript. It is a very natural feeling, certainly, yet many carry it much too far. I have known men, and women too, who could love nothing for the life of them, however amiable, with whom everybody was not charmed! Some men quarrel with those who will not admire their mistress; others love her no longer than she happens to continue the fashion; if, indeed, one may dignify such selfish feelings of admiration as originate only in vanity by the appellation of love! Still it is perfectly natural to desire that our friends and those we respect should sanction our affections by partaking of our admiration.

"It is sweet to do a great many things," Lord Byron said, and he might have added, how very sweet and pure is the delight we all experience at the genuine spontaneous praise bestowed on the object of our choice.

Lord Ponsonby was certainly one of the most reserved and shy men in England, and, being a married man, was naturally, for reasons, desirous of concealing his affections when his wife was not their object. One day, during the time we were living together, I walked into the Green Park with my young brother George. We met Lord Ponsonby in a barouche, acccompanied by his sister, Lady Howick.

"What two merry, lovely faces are those," said her kind ladyship to her brother, "how closely they resemble each other! What a delightful girl! The boy of course must be her brother."

Ponsonby always described this as one of the very happiest moments of his life, nor could all his dread of notoriety, his constitutional reserve, and his sense of what was due both to his wife and his sister, prevent his acknowledging, in answer to Lady Howick's question, why he blushed so deeply, that we had loved each other for more than a year.

"Oh, for shame, John!" said his good-natured sister, at least, so Lord Ponsonby told me, "but then to be sure, this very nice girl does resemble Lady Ponsonby extremely."

"Do you think that fine boy, her brother, would like to go to sea?"

Ponsonby said he would inquire.

"I have taken such a fancy to your Harriette," continued Lady Howick, "that I wish I could be of service to her. I know I can make Lord Howick send her brother out as midshipman."

It was very, very kind!

My little brother wished to go out, and I was ready to do my best to fit him out. Lord Ponsonby was very persevering about it for more than a month; but my poor mother wanted courage to part with so young and certainly so fine a boy . . .

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT do you think of Elliston the actor? I will tell you my opinion. He is one of the most mercenary, selfish creatures I ever met with. I once thought better of him; that was at the very beginning of our acquaintance. I had absolutely been in love with the man ever since I accompanied my mother to witness his performance in the comedy of *The Honeymoon*. Elliston, in the character of the duke, appeared so very manly, so very gentlemanlike, so everything which a man ought to be to win a fair lady's heart, that I did not recover myself for more than a fortnight.

One day, little Livius, of some Dragoon regiment which I have forgotten, having only a sort of bowing, nodding acquaintance with him, met me in Great Portland-street. He touched his hat and begged pardon for running after me; but knowing my talent, he was anxious to obtain my opinion of a little farce he was about to bring out at Drury-lane Theatre, under the title of *Maid and Wife*.

"Will you appoint a time to call on me, and read your piece?" said I.

"Yes, provided you promise to give me your frank and most candid opinion of it, whether good or bad."

I promised to do this on my word, and nine o'clock on the next evening was fixed for his reading the farce to me.

Livius was punctual; he read his little piece with spirit, and played and sung the songs. They were

borrowed from the French, as was the farce, but Livius had adapted it with some taste to the English stage. It was *un assez joli petit rien*, and I doubted not would have its run for a fortnight at least. I expressed my approbation, at which Livius did me the honour to appear very proud.

"Elliston himself is kind enough to play one of my characters, and the others he has given to his very best performers."

"What a charming actor is Elliston," I remarked.

"Would you like to be acquainted with him?" said Livius.

"Of all things in the world," I replied. "The impression he made on me when I was only thirteen years of age, I have not forgotten yet."

"If then," added Livius, "you will allow me to make up your party for the play to-morrow, I have a private box at your service, and I will invite the Honourable George Lamb to join us. Elliston plays in *Wild Oats*, but he will come to us between the acts, or after the play, I have no doubt. At any rate with your permission, we will all sup together at my hotel in Dover Street. I have very good rooms there and three pianofortes, on either of which I shall be delighted to hear you play.'"

I assured him that I would hold myself in readiness at any hour he would appoint to call for me.

"Will you be offended if I venture to introduce a young lady to you?" Livius asked.

"Not at all, provided you permit me to cut her dead, in case her society should not be to my taste."

"Certainly," said Livius; and after begging me to expect him in his own carriage, at seven on the following evening, he left me.

Livius's little farce of *Maid and Wife* was advertised for the approaching Monday. On that day, Livius and I and a pretty, weak, childish young lady found our way to a private box at Drury Lane Theatre, just at the close of the first of *Wild Oats*. We were soon joined by my own faithful Frederick's brother, the

honourable George Lamb, to whom I was presented by Livius. I immediately began to discuss the merits and demerits of Frederick with my usual and abrupt frankness.

"Can anything be more ridiculous," I exclaimed, "than the rage which is caused alone by your not returning a man's passion! Why blame one for what really cannot be helped?"

"Very fine talking," retorted George Lamb, "but in fact, love is the most arbitrary passion we are susceptible of. If you torture a man he must naturally hate you."

"Do you believe in God?" I asked.

"*Et vous, Madame?*" said George Lamb.

"I do indeed," I replied, "believe in his goodness, but not in his vengeance. I dread and abhor the idea of offending him because I believe he would forgive all my faults."

George Lamb looked incredulous.

"If I do really believe in a God, and a hereafter, would you have me affect to be a disbeliever? Because there is an ironical smile on your countenance."

"Not at all," replied George Lamb, with honest truth, or the resemblance of it at least: "not at all; those who do believe in God are mean and contemptible, when they feel ashamed of confessing their faith."

Take him all in all I rather like George Lamb, notwithstanding they say he does eat too much dinner, which occasions him to drink too much wine in order to wash too much dinner down. This does not however prevent his being one of the frankest men I ever met with.

I did not altogether like Elliston in *Wild Oats*. He made too many faces, and reminded me of the minor theatres, where grimace is in considerable request. Perhaps also, since the time I fell in love with him in *The Honeymoon*, he was all the worse for having presided over a small theatre as manager for

several years. He joined us after the play, and being tipsy, which is generally the case with him, I thought him very pleasant, although as I have since discovered there is not a heavier, more matter-of-fact, stupid companion on earth than Elliston, when he is sober.

I asked George Lamb if he had heard Mr. Livius's new piece.

"Part of it only; but, from what I saw, I think it must be a very lively *petite comédie*," answered Lamb.

Elliston made very free with us all, and especially with George Lamb.

As soon as the curtain dropped and we were all seated in the carriage, Elliston got in a passion with Livius's coachman for not immediately moving on.

"What the devil is the matter?" said he, "what detains your man? All this fuss about a rascally three hundred pound-house and not twenty carriages!"

"I told you Munden's day was over, and that he would not fill the house, before you engaged him for to-night," said George Lamb.

"I say," answered Elliston, "Munden would have filled the house if it had been a fine night."

"Not he," said George Lamb, "your crownation might, but not Munden!"

"Hold your tongue, you are a Whig," said Elliston; and George Lamb was silent, after a grunt.

"But what in the name of the devil is your ass of a coachman keeping us here for?" said Elliston.

"Why, Livius, I thought you piqued yourself on being at all times remarkably well appointed."

Livius confessed he knew not what to make of it; and put out his head to inquire of his footman what was the reason of being kept stationary.

The footman's voice was drowned by the vociferation of Elliston from the opposite window.

"Where's Townsend, or any of the constables?"

A constable approached the carriage.

"Why the devil don't you manage better?" roared

out Elliston; "why is the road blocked up in this manner?"

"It is not blocked up at all, Mr. Elliston," answered the constable, "it's nothing in the world but the coachman as is so drunk, he can't sit on his box."

"God bless my soul!" said Livius, and then he called out again to his footman to know what was the matter.

The footman either could not or did not choose to explain.

"Get you then on the box and drive us home, Jem," said Livius.

No sooner said than done. Jem, having mounted the box, entreated his fellow servant to give up the reins.

"Touch my honour, touch my life," said the coachman, who absolutely refused to part with the whip.

"D—n his rascally drunken soul!" said Elliston, trying to force open the carriage-door. "I'll settle him! Trust me for having him off his perch in half a second. Of all things I abhor a drunkard!"

"For God's sake, Elliston, be quiet," said George Lamb.

"You seem to take it perfectly easy," said I, to Lamb, "seeing that all our precious necks are in danger!"

"We must take our chance," answered Lamb quietly. "The only thing I particularly dread is the idea of Elliston attempting to drive us home himself. I can bear anything but that."

The coachman and footman now appeared to be fighting on the box, Livius was scolding and bawling out of one window, Elliston *faisant un bruit tel qu'il n'y en eut jamais en enfer*, at the other, because he could not get the coach door open, and nobody would come to his assistance. At last he succeeded; the footman made room for him on the box, and Elliston quietly threw the drunken coachman off on to the pavement, box-coat and all, in spite of his swearing and kicking.

Livius got out of the carriage, and picked the man up, to ascertain that he was alive, as he fell without uttering a groan.

"Oh! for shame, you cowardly wretch, to treat an honest poor coachman in that brutal way! Why you've killed him, poor dear soul!" said an old hag, who happened to pass at the instant.

Elliston, still smarting with the knocks, kicks and scratches he had got in his scuffle with the obstinate coachman, was not in a very gentle humour. The woman forced herself in his way, and he, I presume, pushed her rather ungallantly aside.

"Oh you coward! oh you coward!" screamed out the woman; "strike a woman, hay! here's a coward for you!"

"Oh! Mr. Elliston," said I, shaking my head at him, as he stood at the carriage window.

"I only touched her just so," said Elliston, tapping me on the head.

"Just so!" repeated his fair antagonist, "why he has half kill'd me; here, watchman! watchman!"

The rattle was sprung, and behold Elliston and Livius surrounded by the guardians of the night.

What became of the coachman I know not; but, in about five minutes more, Elliston jumped into the carriage and ordered the footman to drive to Mr. Livius's Hotel in Dover Street.

"Where is Livius?" asked we all three in a breath.

"Gone to the watch-house," said Elliston, with the most perfect composure.

"How so?" asked George Lamb.

"What has he done?" inquired the young lady in a pet, declaring that no one had been to blame but Mr. Elliston; therefore she would not stir till Mr. Livius was safe.

"Nonsense, nonsense! fair lady. Let him use my name at the watch-house!"

"Where, I presume, you are well known, Mr. Mountebank added I.

"One of us must have gone," said Elliston laugh-

ing, "and I tell you he will join us before we have finished our supper. It serves him right for having a drunken coachman. Why all our necks would have been broken by this time, but for me."

"To hear that man talk," said George Lamb, "one might almost be led to believe he was a very fine fellow!"

On our arrival at Livius's lodgings in Dover Street, we found an elegant, cold supper laid out, with plenty of champagne on the side-board.

"Your master is gone to the watch-house," said Elliston, "and has requested me to do the honours. Ah! ah!" continued he, taking up one of the soup plates, "we have white soup, I presume. I am very fond of white soup, and am very hungry. Pray, bring it up directly."

The young lady and I declare that it was a shame and a sin to sit down without Livius.

George Lamb begged leave to differ in opinion; because he wanted his supper.

Elliston insisted, and the white soup made its appearance. In about a quarter of an hour after we were seated, Livius entered the room quite out of breath.

"Did not I tell you he would soon join us?" said Elliston. "Sit down, my dear Livius. Your white soup was so excellent, that there is none left. You used my name, of course, at the watch-house?"

"If he had, he would have been kept there for a week," observed George Lamb, and Elliston laughed heartily, though very slily.

"This," said Elliston, drawing out a small unbound volume from his pocket, "this is the French farce from which Kemble has taken the new piece he is to bring out next Thursday. What think you of our getting it up the same evening?"

"Let me see it," said Livius. Elliston desired that he would translate a few lines.

George Lamb and Elliston together, after they had

listened to a page or two, with one voice exclaimed, "Very stupid."

"Mine is but mere literal translation," said Livius. "Harriette, no doubt, could make something of it."

"Will you oblige me by undertaking it, madam?" inquired Elliston, "and completing it in two days?"

"If anybody can be found to accomplish the songs," I observed, "I won't be behindhand."

"I will rhyme them in English," said George Lamb, "if you really wish it."

"And I will set them to music," added Livius, "provided Mr. Lamb will sit up all night to get them done in time for me."

"I think it wont answer," said George, "and be only tiring the poor performers, as well as ourselves, to no purpose; but, if you really have fixed your heart upon the thing, I will devote a night, and finish the songs."

Elliston waxed more generous as he waxed more drunk, and suddenly throwing the farce behind the fire, exclaimed, "This competition with the other house is paltry and ungentlemanlike. I will have none of it. It is in too bad a taste; besides," said he, half in mockery, "Mr. Livius's piece is to have such a run, we shall want nothing else all the season!"

"Apropos of that little piece," said I, "I wish Livius would play the songs, and sing them to us."

Livius was immediately seated at the pianoforte. When he got to the last chorus-song Elliston jumped up, declaring he was to sing that with the rest, and had not yet heard a word of it. He then began, with a serious face, accompanying Livius.

"Oh 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love."

"Elliston!" bawled out George Lamb, "why the deuce don't you come and finish your supper? I want to speak to you."

Elliston took no notice; but continued his "*Oh! 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love.*"

"Livius," then said George Lamb, "I want to ask you whether you have places to spare for your night?"

"Elliston won't allow me to leave off," replied Livius, still continuing to play, to Elliston's "*Oh! 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love!*"

"Leave off, you blockhead!" said George Lamb to Elliston. "I will lay you fifty guineas that you do not repeat one line as Livius has written it, either in your song or your speech."

Elliston appeared to agree, and give up the matter as hopeless, for, darting from the pianoforte towards Livius's young, female friend, who still continued at table, he gave her such an ardent embrace that she was quite frightened, and then, as I sat next, he conferred the same honour on me.

"Good heavens! what a mountebank is here!" said I, pushing him from me.

George Lamb sat next; for he had not half finished his supper. Elliston placed himself in a theatrical attitude ready to embrace him.

"And, as to you, my George!" said he, with much pathos.

"For God's sake," exclaimed George Lamb, with his mouth full of dried cherries, "for God's sake, do not play the fool with me!"

Elliston now seated himself by my side, and said, in a whisper, "Don't you want tea?"

"No, but you do, I see," answered I, and I had the charity to request Livius to give me some tea.

Elliston did the honours of the tea-table. The tea had a surprising effect in making him stupid; because it made him sober. He politely offered me his private box for Livius's night, and regretted that it was not a better one. It was a large box, on the stage; but rather too high up. Livius had a private box to himself, and tickets for a host of friends.

"It is three o'clock," said I, at last, "and I dare not risk my *petite santé*, another instant."

"Good people are so scarce!" added George Lamb.

"No," I added, "I am good for very little. You will find better people every day, and wiser; but nobody at all like me."

George Lamb expressed himself quite of this opinion.

It was past four o'clock in the morning when I got home.

The Duke of Leinster, Harry De Roos, and Sophia dined with me on the following day. Just as we were about to sit down to dinner Lord Deerhurst was announced.

"Dear me, how tiresome," said Sophia.

"Do not send him here, pray," said Leinster and de Roos in the same breath. I went down to ask him what he wanted, and informed him of my dinner-party, with whom I knew he was unacquainted.

"Oh, I wish much to know the Duke of Leinster, so pray do introduce me," said Deerhurst.

"No," I answered, "I shall do no such thing. That's frank and flat. If you don't like Sophia to dine here you may, with her consent, take her away with you, but I will never present you to any friend of mine. Sophia told you this morning that she was to meet the Duke of Leinster and his cousin."

"Certainly," answered Deerhurst, "I have not the slightest objection; but do, there's a dear good creature, present me to the Duke of Leinster."

"You are, in all and everything, the meanest man on earth," was my civil remark.

"You refuse then?" said Deerhurst.

"I do," repeated I impatiently, "and you must now allow me to wish you a good morning, as we were going to dinner immediately."

"Then," said Deerhurst, "I must introduce myself, that's all:" and, disregarding all I could say or do to prevent him, he ran into the drawing-room, took off his hat with a low bow, and said,

"Duke, allow me to introduce, and earnestly recommend to your notice, Viscount Deerhurst."

The Duke had no pride, and was very mean and stingy, nobody more so; but he paid his bills, and was what the world calls an honourable man. To do him common justice, I do not think he would like to

break his word, however much it might be to his interest, and well as he loved money. He disliked Deerhurst's character, and was too natural and not half polite enough to conceal his displeasure at being so unceremoniously intruded upon. He bowed very slightly without speaking, and the smile with which he greeted his lordship was scarcely perceptible.

Harry De Roos was as proud as he was shy, and took no sort of notice of Deerhurst, beyond rising from his chair when his lordship turned from His Grace to his cousin.

Deerhurst's stock of assurance was not to be diminished by two mere boys. He seated himself near Sophia, ever certain of her unqualified approbation at all events.

"Well, Soph, my love, are you glad to see me?"

"Yes, I am very glad indeed," replied Sophia.

"I'll tell you something, Lord Deerhurst," said I. "I do not like quarrelling with people and especially in my own house; but, seriously, I must tell you that these gentlemen expected to meet Sophia and me only, and your intrusion is really a little cool."

Sophia said I was quite right, it really was very cool indeed, and she had heard His Grace request that we would fix on a day when nobody else was coming.

"If His Grace will say he wishes to get rid of me I am off," remarked his lordship.

What could the easy tempered Leinster do less than declare his happiness to see him?

Deerhurst possesses talents and can be very agreeable. He was growing tired of being cut by so many respectable people; therefore he set about winning the friendship of the Duke of Leinster. He talked of sailing and boats, big fiddles and Irish watchmen; praised to the skies such of the Irish nobility as lived on their estates, and imitated the Irish brogue as though he had been practising it all the days of his life. Leinster was delighted with him.

After dinner, Luttrell called to say that Amy gave

her first party since her confinement, on this evening, and had permitted him to say that, as it was a mutual convenience that we should meet civilly at parties, and neither friendship not intimacy was necessary for that purpose, she was ready to ratify the engagement made between us a few years back, to offer me no insult and desired I would go to her in the course of the evening, and bring as many of my male friends as I pleased.

I asked Leinster and De Roos if they would like to take me to Amy's with them.

"Most willingly," was their answer.

"Make no apologies for not asking me," said Deerhurst, "for, with all my impudence, I do not think I could face that tartar of a sister of yours without a special invitation."

"Are you fond of looking at jewellery?" I asked Luttrell.

"Very," answered Luttrell, "and I believe I am rather a good judge too."

"Then," said I, "Sophia, my dear, if you have brought your jewels with you, pray ask Mr. Luttrell's opinion of their value."

Sophia drew from her reticule two smart jewel-boxes, of Love the jeweller.

"These are the jewels which were presented to my sister by Viscount Deerhurst," said I, as I handed them to Mr. Luttrell.

The box contained a necklace of large green glass-beads, set in yellow metal. There was a leader ring, with a blue bead in it, a small Tunbridge-ware tooth-pick case, with "When this you see, remember me," superscribed on it, and two brass seals, one with the name of Sophia on it, the other, with a little winged figure, evidently meant for a cupid or a parrot; but it was very difficult to decide which it most resembled. Everybody laughed heartily, but the loudest laugher of our party was Viscount Deerhurst.

"And then," said Deerhurst, trying to recover himself, "and then, having won the young lady by

dint of these valuable jewels, Robinson, the attorney of Bolton street, first draws up an agreement to secure to her an annuity of three hundred a year, and the next day tells you his agreement is not worth sixpence!"

There was only one of our society who carried politeness so far as to seem amused at such disgusting profligacy.

Luttrell looked with unqualified contempt on his lordship. Leinster and De Roos, considering themselves too young to set an example, or reform the age, fixed their eyes steadily on the carpet, while De Roos's fair cheek was tinged with a deep blush. Sophia alone joined Lord Deerhurst in his laugh; declaring that it was very funny to be sure.

"Lord Deerhurst," said I, "Sophia is my sister, and if she chooses to submit to insult and ill-usage from you, it shall not be in my house, where you were not invited."

Sophia immediately worked herself up into a passion of tears, declaring that she did not want to be insulted, and would much rather not return to Lord Deerhurst, who, she was sure, was a very nasty man indeed, and hardly ever washed his head.

Deerhurst carelessly declared himself quite ready to support the dire calamity, and wished, of all things, Sophia would live with her sister Harriette.

"The man is not worth a thought, much less a tear," said I to Sophia. "You are welcome to my house as long as I have one to share with you; in the meantime let us drive to Amy's."

Sophia did not accompany us; but retired with Lord Deerhurst, who had remarked in her ear that I was jealous and wanted him myself.

"I think Harriette is a little jealous really, so I'll go home with you, to make her mad," said Sophia.

And off they went.

Amy's drawing-room was quite full. She looked very well, and fairer, as well as less fierce, than before her confinement. Fanny appeared unusually lovely,

dressed in a pale pink crape dress, which set off her rosy, white, delicate skin, to the greatest advantage; and with her unadorned bright auburn curls, waving carelessly around her laughing, dark blue eyes and beautiful throat, she seemed the most desirable object in the room. Julia was very fair too; perhaps her skin was whiter than Fanny's and of quite as delicate a texture; but it had not the vermillion tinge, and the blue veins were less defined. Both were of the highest order of fine forms. They were also of the same height, which was that best adapted to perfect symmetry; their feet and ankles were alike models for the statuary's art, and Fanny's shoes fitted Julia as well as her own; but Fanny's hair was dark and more glossy than Julia's. Fanny's teeth were beautiful, while Julia's, though strong, were uneven; and Fanny's smile was infinitely more attractive than Julia's, whose countenance was in fact, as I think I have before mentioned, rather harsh than pleasing. Yet there was such a decided resemblance in their *tout ensemble*, that everybody mistook Julia for Fanny's elder sister.

This evening Julia, I suppose with a view to outshine us all, wore a dress of white silvered lama on gauze, and a Turkish turban of bright blue, fringed with gold. There was a voluptuous and purely effeminate languor about Julia's character, which was well adapted to the eastern style of dress. The large, strait, gauze sleeve did not at all conceal the symmetry of her beautiful arm. Fanny's dimpled arms were quite uncovered, and encircled with elegant but simple bracelets, composed of plaited hair, clasped with a magnificently brilliant ruby. They were both infinitely graceful. Fanny would lay her laughing face on her folded arms, reclining on a table, while she made some odd reflections, or she would fasten her pocket-handkerchief or her shawl across her head and ears, when she felt the air affect her head, without inquiring of her glass whether she had thus added to or diminished her attractions: yet everything became

her; or rather all were determined to think faultless, her in whose beautiful eyes shone the warmest philanthropy, whose every word and action proved the desire she ever felt to make others appear to advantage.

Julia's attitudes, though graceful, were studied and luxurious; but always modest and effeminate.

Amy wore a yellow satin dress, fastened round the waist with a gold band. Her profuse raven locks were entirely unadorned, and her neck, arms and fingers were covered with glittering jewels of every colour. My own evening dresses were invariably composed of rich, figured, white French gauze over white satin; and I never wore any ornaments in my hair, of which I was not a little proud; but my earrings were of unusual length, and consisted of diamonds, rubies and turquoise stones. A Mrs. Armstrong, whom Amy had lately patronised, was of the party. She was the *chère amie* of Colonel Armstrong, an aide-de-camp of the Duke of York. It was said of the duchess, that she carried her charity so far as to send yearly presents to the mistress of her royal husband's aide-de-camp, but if this were really true, I have always heard that, in all but the ceremony of marriage, the mother of Colonel Armstrong's children, from her steady adherence to her protector during seven years, and her resistance of temptation, which assailed her in every shape, deserved the encouragement of the great and the good.

In spite of the strict economy which she invariably practised, the colonel had lately decided that his circumstances would not, in common prudence, admit of his running the slightest risk of increasing his family.

"We will be excellent friends, my love," said he, to his better half, "but friends only."

This may be very easy at the age of fifty, but his Lucy was still in the prime of youth, and old as he was she loved her Tommy dearly, and was very melancholy at his determination.

"We cannot have separate beds you know, my dear," said Lucy; "because there is not a spare bed in the house."

"That is true, my love," answered her Tommy, "but it really must be all the same."

Lucy sighed heavily.

"Go and visit your friend Amy, my dear," said the kind colonel, "it will enliven you; and since our family is not to be increased, I can afford to put my last dozen of shirts out to be made. Now that our boy William can run alone, there is no necessity for my poor Lucy making such a slave of herself."

"Alas!" thought poor Lucy, "I am terribly afraid of being tempted in Amy's gay society;" but she did not say so.

Lucy was a very neat, lady-like little creature, who used to wear very fine muslin gowns, ornamented with her own beautiful embroidery. Her teeth were extremely white and regular, and her lips of bright vermilion; but I could not discern any other beauty in her. Nevertheless she was a great favourite with the men, and would make fifty conquests while Julia was bungling with one. Lucy had a way of disarming the most impudent, when they attempted to take the slightest liberty with her: not by her dignified deportment, nor by her wit; but by the mere simplicity of her truly modest carriage, which was so far removed from prudery that nobody knew how to offend her.

This evening was set apart for dancing, and Fanny and Julia being the very best dancers in the room were in their glory.

All the world were, or wished they were there, but many could not get further than the passage, the whole house being so crammed. Among others was the man they call the dancing Montgomery, although perhaps I do him too much honour by putting him in print; he was such a slovenly unlicked cub, of what particular family I am ignorant; but it was clear this man had originally been designed by nature for a lout,

only he went to Paris and came home a dancer, every inch of him below the girdle. As for his shoulders and arms they continued as before; Frenchmen cannot work miracles like German princes! but they converted into a fop this ready-made clown, to the utter discomfiture of our gauzes and Indian muslins, which were sure to suffer, as often as we ventured to employ him to hand us tea, negus, or orgeat.

"Would you like to dance?" said George Brummell, to Mrs. Armstrong, *en passant.*

"I have only just left off," answered she, rising, and curtseying with much politeness; "but I am never tired of dancing."

"You have a dancing face," Brummell quietly observed, fixing his eyes steadily on her countenance for a second or two, and then passing on.

Poor Lucy, she afterwards declared to us, was never so ashamed and humbled since she had been born.

All this time, Montgomery's thick straight locks were steadily beating time on his watery forehead, as he trod the mazy dance with all his might, footing it away most scholastically. He did indeed dance famously; but then he was always out at the elbows, which appeared to have no connection whatever with his feet, particularly on this eventful night, when one of his elbows came in such neighbourly contact with the eye of the poor Duc de Berri, who was just entering the room, while Montgomery was swinging short corners near the door, as sent his Royal Highness reeling backwards.

Tout le monde fût au désespoir!

"*Mon Dieu! Quel malheur, monsieur le duc!*" said Amy.

"*Rien, rien du tout,*" answered the good-natured Duc de Berri, holding his handkerchief to his eye.

"*Il y a tant de monde ici, ce soir, et la salle n'est pas grande, comme vous voyez, monsieur,*" said Fanny, to His Highness; as usual endeavouring to excuse and conciliate all parties.

"*Ma fois! je n'y vois goutte!*" said the duke, laughing, with his handkerchief still before his eyes.

Montgomery came forward to express his regrets; but it was plain, from his manner, that he did not at all attribute the accident to anything like awkwardness on the part of himself or his elbows, of which he seemed not a part. However, I do not mean to depreciate Mr. Montgomery's dancing in the least; only do but give him elbow-room and he will astonish you!

Mr. Quintin Dick of Curzon Street Mayfair was now announced, and contrived to make his way towards Amy.

Quintin Dick is a man of fifteen or twenty thousand a year; at least, so I guess; for there is no subject on which people are more likely to be mistaken in than that of private finances. However, in spite of his fortune, Quintin Dick is and has been one of the most unpopular men within the United Kingdom. By birth an Irishman, by trade a linen-draper, no, by-the-bye, I am wrong, it was his father, who, they say, dealt in linen, not Quintin himself, carroty Quintin, of whom I cannot say I ever knew any particular harm. I however took it for granted that he was mean and vilely shabby, having never heard two opinions on that point.

I remember Colonel Armstrong telling me one day at Brighton, that the woman who ever got a shilling or a shilling's worth out of Mr. Quintin Dick, ought to be immortalised. I immediately resolved to make the attempt. Meeting Dick the next morning on the Steyne, I told him that I had taken a fancy to an article of millinery, which I was at that moment too poor to purchase, though the price of it was under five pounds. Can it be credited! he actually requested permission to send it home!

Armstrong would not believe me till I showed him the receipt. *Au reste*, Quintin is the man to whom somebody is said to have remarked, observing that he wore the wrist-bands of his shirt-sleeves so fashionably low as to pass his knuckles, "I am sorry, Mr.

Dick, to see that you have so much linen on hand." It strikes me however, that this must be a joke of a hundred years old. No matter. He came this evening to ask us three sisters, as well as Julia and Mrs. Armstrong, to dine with him on the approaching Saturday.

"Who are your men?" I asked.

"Lords Hertford and Alvanly, the Hon. J. Ward, Nugent, Luttrell, and another man or two, whose names I have forgotten," Dick replied.

We all accepted his invitation on account of his party. For himself, he was a man of very few words. In fact, he scarcely ever spoke at all; and when he did he attempted to be satirical; but his were the very worst attempts I ever heard.

Montagu, the relation of the lady in Gloucester Place, of chimney-sweeping notoriety, assisted to keep up the spirit of the dance. Ward walked about, repeating Greek and Latin verses to himself as usual. He made love to Amy and Fanny alternately. I once knew a mistress of his, nay two! Perhaps I may tell you what sort of a character they gave him some other time. Napier came sneaking and grinning into the room, and informed us that either Lord Bath or Lord Bathurst, I forget which, was bringing him into parliament.

"More shame for you, who ought not to have given up your independence for millions," said I. "You cannot now vote against the man who gives you a seat."

Napier showed his teeth, merely observing, "You have such a comical way of talking to one."

Lord Fife now came sailing up the room, and all the women immediately made up to him. "My lord," said one, "have you spoken to the manager about bringing my young friend out at the opera house this season?"

"Yes, yes," said Fife, nodding his head, "I saw him to-day; he expects her. When you take her to him, send in my card and he will receive you well."

JAMES DUFF, EARL OF FIFE

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"Dear Lord Fife," said another, "we want to go to Elliston's masquerade."

"Certainly, certainly, to be sure," answered the good-natured Fife, still nodding assent, "I will send you tickets to-morrow."

"And I," said Amy, "want a box at Covent Garden on Monday."

"To be sure, to be sure," still continued the promising earl.

"Lord Fife," said I, "Sir Harcourt Lees wants to shoot grouse this season, on your estate in the North."

"To be sure, tell me when he goes, and I'll give him a letter to my brother."

"I know an excellent old Frenchwoman," said Mrs. Armstrong, "who wants you to buy a watch of hers."

"Let her come to me in the morning, to be sure! to be sure!"

I could not help laughing at Lord Fife. "Why what a good-natured man you are," said I.

"Oh!" answered Fife, "I have such female *levées* every morning, you'd be surprised. People of the first respectability, I assure you, do me the honour to come when they want money."

"How very condescending," said I.

"Too much so sometimes, I can tell you," answered Fife, "for one morning last week, I gave £500 among them; but this, you know, will not quite do every morning: besides time, time is what I regret; they take up all my time, I can't get out. It is often past seven before I can get in my carriage, for the life of me, and then I lose my dinner to get out at all."

"Why don't you make your servants deny you?" said I.

"Why I tried that, but then my valet denied me one day to a charming creature whom I wished of all things to see, and I was obliged to open my doors to them all again, lest this sweet girl should re-visit me, and a second time be refused."

I think it was on this evening I saw Colonel Parker for the first time. He appeared to have seriously

attached himself to my sister Fanny. He was an officer in the Artillery, and a near relation to Lady Hyde Parker, I believe. I was anxious to see poor Fanny comfortably settled, and her tastes being all so quiet and her temper so amiable, I knew that riches were by no means necessary to her felicity. Colonel Parker possessed a comfortable independence, and was very anxious to have Fanny entirely under his protection. "She shall bear my name, and I will show her all the respect a wife can require, and she shall always find me a gentleman," said he. I could not however help thinking that Fanny, with her strictly honest principles, her modest, amiable character, and her beauty, ought to have been Parker's wife instead of his mistress, and therefore I did not advise her to live with him. His person was elegant; fine teeth and fine hair were however all he had to boast of in the way of beauty; but Fanny did not like handsome men, and appeared very much to admire and esteem Colonel Parker. I do not exactly know what age man he was; but I should think him under thirty.

I could not but observe the gay Montagu and his wonderful luck in addressing himself to witty persons. He was now laughing himself almost into hysterics at something Mr. Dick said to him at one of the windows. Then I heard him say, "Capital! charming!" in answer to something which the Duc de Berri had said. At last I saw him talking to Leinster. "This will decide it," said I to myself; "for if he says anything is excellent, or charming, or capital, that His Grace utters, I know what I will do." I had scarcely settled the business in my own mind, when I saw Montagu blowing his nose in an agony of laughter at something superexcellent, which he declared the poor bog-trotter Leinster had uttered. This was too much, well as I love a civil man; so, calling Montagu to my side, after having placed myself close to some noisy people, who were talking and gesticulating with all their might, I asked him if

he had heard an excellent story about Amy and Harry Mildmay.

"No, but pray tell it me directly: it must be so very excellent."

"Listen then," said I, and I began to laugh and to say "you must know Amy met Mildmay in the park;" and then I went on with a few unconnected words, affecting suitable action, and to be half dead, or quite choked with laughter. So far from repeating anything like a story I did not connect two words of common sense together; and if I had, we were in such a noisy neighbourhood I could not have been heard, yet Montagu, with equal reason, once more gave full play to his risible faculties, and appeared quite as delighted with my story as he had been with Leinster's, declaring aloud it was the very best thing he had ever heard in his whole life.

But I am tired of this party of Amy's, therefore my kind readers will permit me to change the subject.

The next day, I was remarking to my young admirer, the Duke of Leinster, that life was nothing without a little love; and then begged him to say who was best worth having.

"I think the Duchess of Beaufort's brother, Lord George Leveson Gower, the most desirable man I ever saw," said Leinster.

"How is one to obtain a sight of your beauty?"

"I cannot assist you; and if I could I would not," His Grace replied.

"I do not care," said I to myself, after Leinster had left me, "I am not going to sit down all my life to love this fool. I must have something for the mind to feed on."

I was interrupted while making these wise reflections by a visit from Wellington.

"Here is a thing in the shape of an intellectual companion," thought I.

After Wellington had left me I entirely forgot him: nay, before; for I now recollect that he said

something about my bad taste in talking on subjects irrelevant to what was going on; such as a remark I might have made about my rose-tree or my dinner, when I ought to have been all soul! No matter! The soul's fire is partly kept alive by dinner; or, whether it is or not, still dinner, or even a rose-tree, is infinitely more interesting than the Wellington!

First love is all in all, say a great many writers, and a great many more old maids, particularly ugly ones, who have been courted only once for first and last, and must even make the best of it, For my own part, if I am to credit the quiet, unimpassioned assertion of the Duke of Argyle, who knew human nature well, after the hey-day of mere blind love was over, I must believe myself not naturally given to change.

"Harriette," said Argyle, "is more steady in her attachments than almost any woman of her celebrity, so surrounded with flatterers, whom I have ever met with."

Of course, my fair readers would not have me guilty of such extreme ill-breeding as to differ in opinion from a noble duke! Nevertheless, I confess that I had only ceased to love one, who was bound for life to another, and who had most cruelly trifled with my feelings, while he took a most unfair advantage of my youth, of my warmth of heart, and of my total lack of experience.

I now felt *le besoin d'aimer*, with almost the same ardour as when I used to follow the handsome stranger and his large dog, which induces me to believe, that never did a fair lady die of love for one man, whilst others equally amiable were dying for her smiles.

In a fit of folly I wrote a letter to Lord G. L. Gower, requesting him to come and meet me in the Regent's Park at eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning; at the same time assuring him, that desirous as I was, from all I had heard of his perfections, to make his acquaintance, yet, if he expected to

please me, he must show me just as much respect and humble deference, as though I had not ordered him up to Marylebone Fields to be looked at.

Lord G. L. Gower's reply was:

"I do not usually answer such letters; but there is something so eccentric and uncommon in yours, that I cannot resist complying with your request, therefore you will find me at the appointed time and place.

"G. L. Gower."

As the hour drew near for fulfilling my engagement in the Regent's Park, I recollected that I did not in the least know the person of Lord G. L. Gower, and felt much puzzled how I should contrive to distinguish him from any handsome man who might happen to be enjoying the fresh air towards Primrose Hill. However, trusting to chance, or sympathy, or that instinct by which, according to Falstaff, the lion knows the true prince, I dressed myself with unusual care and contrived to be punctual. I observed a tall, rather handsome and gentlemanly man looking about him; but as I felt at once that he was not in any respect cut out for the honour of filling up the void in my heart, I prayed the God of Love to send me a better subject.

However, there was nothing to be seen at that early hour on Sunday morning which in the least resembled a gentleman, or even, in their Sunday new coats and bran new yellow leather gloves, could be mistaken for one, that came within a mile of me.

"This must be Leinster's Apollo," said I. How could I address myself to such a booby? True, this man may perhaps have a certain indescribable charm about him, a *je ne sais quoi*, which may not be discoverable at the first glance! I ventured to raise my eyes to his face, and, if I did not laugh, I looked as though I was thinking about it; and on this he spoke and smiled, and blushed, and bowed.

I conceived that, having brought a man up to

Marylebone Fields on such a terribly hot morning, it would not have been fair or lady-like to have dismissed him, until I had given his talents and powers of pleasing a fair trial. I walked him up to the tip-top of Primrose Hill, and then towards Hampstead, and then back again to Great Portland Street.

At last his lordship made a full stop, while he took off his hat to wipe his face, declaring he could go no further, as he was quite unaccustomed to walking and the sun was so very oppressive. He therefore entreated that I would permit him to accompany me immediately to my house, if only to sit down and rest, or otherwise he apprehended—fever or sudden death!

I assured him I was sorry, very sorry, and hoped such fatal consequences would not follow our little rural bit of pleasure; at the same time I could only express my regrets, while I frankly declared to him that he was not in the least the sort of person I wanted.

Lord George L. Gower was too proud, too well-looking, to be deeply wounded at my determination, so he smiled, and bowed, and wished me good morning, declaring himself much amused with the eccentricity and frankness of my character.

It will not do, I see, to lay one's self out for love, thought I, after his lordship had left me. It comes, like money, when one is not thinking about it. Reading is a much more independent amusement than loving. Books one may cut, when one is tired of them; so I began immediately on arriving home with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters*. The style was very unequal I thought: now paltry and ungraceful, now elevated. The same observations were applicable to the sentiments she expressed. In some letters one would accuse her of being both indecent and profligate; in others she displayed herself as the most refined, elegant and delicate of her sex. I read as far as this passage:—"Our vulgar notions that Mahomet did not own women to have any souls, is a mistake. It is true, he says they are

not of so elevated a kind, and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for the men, who are to be entertained by celestial beauties. But there is a place of happiness destined for souls of the inferior order, where all good women are to be in eternal bliss. Any woman that dies unmarried is looked upon to die in a state of reprobation. To confirm this, I believe they reason that the end of the creation of woman is to increase and multiply, and that she is only properly employed in the works of her calling, when she is bringing forth children, or taking care of them, which is all the virtue God expects of her."

I threw the book down at this passage, beginning to feel very much ashamed of myself; I rang my bell, and sent to my bookseller for the "History of Mahomet," hoping that most prolific prophet would put me in the way of obeying his commands in case, after duly studying his laws, I were disposed to turn Turk.

I seriously determined to choose my own religion, instead of following blindly that which happened to be my father's. If this determination be sinful, I must still think it ever has been, and ever will be the sin of all intelligent minds. The uneducated child, or the rudest clown who earns his hard fare by the sweat of his brow, and whistles as he returns home for want of thought, will give the same answers, when you ask why they say their prayers, namely, "Because the parson says I ought." Will it not occur to them that accident has had much to do with their being Christians, or Jews, or Turks? Will not they be aware of the force of early impressions, good or bad, and, if but to impress on their mind the wisdom and justice, as well as the superiority of the religion they were born in, will they not compare it steadily with that of the greater part of the creation? It may be answered that all religions are good, and we have but to act up to our belief of what is right, which is all that justice can require of

us: yet will the ardent mind, while suffering under the various ills which flesh is heir to, be led to doubt and to search eagerly into the reason why a just God, who is our father, has created us for so much misery.

I pondered a whole night on these expressive words of Lord Byron, in his "Childe Harold":

> Our life is a false nature, 'tis not in
> The harmony of things—this hard decree,
> This uneradicable taint of sin,
> This boundless Upas, this all blasting tree,
> Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches
> The skies, which rain their plagues on me like dew,
> Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see not, which
> throbs through
> The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new
> Yet, let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
> Abandonment of reason, to resign
> Our right of thought—our last and only place
> Of refuge; this at least, shall still be mine:
> Though, from our birth, the faculty divine
> Is charmed and tortured—cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
> And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
> Too brightly, in the unprepared mind,
> The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

However all my time, and all my pondering, and all my skill, only confirmed me the more steadily in this opinion—that I know nothing about it.

I had long been sentimentally in love with Lord Byron, and some years previous to the publication of the last canto of "Childe Harold," I had written to him to solicit the honour of his acquaintance.

"If, my lord," said I, in my letter, "to have been cold and indifferent to every other modern poet, while I have passed whole nights in studying your productions with the eagerness of one who has discovered a new source of enjoyment as surprising as it was delightful, deserves gratitude from the vanity of an author, or the gallantry of a gentleman, you will honour me with a little of your friendship."

Would you believe, reader, this eloquent epistle obtained me no answer during three long days? I was furious, and wrote again to tell him that he was a mere pedant; that my common sense was a match for his fine rhymes; that the best of us poor weak mortals—and I acknowledged him to be at the head of the list—must still be ignorant, subject to sickness, ill-temper, and various errors in judgment, therefore was there little excuse for his impertinence, in presuming to find fault with the whole world, as he had done in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," at an age when his natural judgment could not be matured. It was vulgar, and showed the littleness which some want of philanthropy towards our poor fellow creatures always must evince. Was he really so superior, and would he crush the poor worms which dared not aspire to his perfections? Or was he but a mere upstart man, of extraordinary genius, without strength of mind to know what he would be at? Could he not, at least, have declined the honour I wanted to confer on him, civilly?

This eloquent letter ended simply thus, after assuring him that it was now much too late to make my acquaintance, as I had changed my mind and no longer desired it the least in the world—like the fox and the grapes—

"you be hang'd!

"HARRIETTE WILSON."

This, to a favourite, was tolerably severe; but when I take a liking to a person I must and will be something to them; so if they will not like me I always make it my business and peculiar care that they shall dislike and quarrel with me. Let me once get them into a quarrel and I am sure of them.

The next day I received the following answer from Lord Byron, dated Albany, Piccadilly.

"If my silence has hurt 'your pride or your feelings,' to use your own expressions, I am very sorry for it; be assured that such effect was far from my intention.

Business, and some little bustle attendant on changing my residence, prevented me from thanking you for your letter as soon as I ought to have done. If my thanks do not displease you now, pray accept them. I could not feel otherwise than obliged by the desire of a stranger to make my acquaintance.

"I am not unacquainted with your name or your beauty, and I have heard much of your talents; but I am not the person whom you would like, either as a lover or a friend. I did not, and do not 'suspect you,' to use your own words once more, of any design of making love to me. I know myself well enough to acquit any one, who does not know me, and still more those who do, from any such intention. I am not of a nature to be loved, and so far, luckily for myself, I have no wish to be so. In saying this, I do not mean to affect any particular stoicism, and may possibly, at one time or other, have been liable to those follies for which you sarcastically tell me I have now no time: but these, and everything else, are to me at present objects of indifference; and this is a good deal to say, at six-and-twenty. You tell me that you wished to know me better; because you liked my writing. I think you must be aware that a writer is in general very different from his productions, and always disappoints those who expect to find in him qualities more agreeable than those of others; I shall certainly not be lessened in my vanity as a scribbler, by the reflection that a work of mine has given you pleasure; and, to preserve the impression in its favour, I will not risk your good opinion by inflicting my acquaintance upon you.

"Very truly your obliged servant.

"B."

This was very dry; but, I had not aspired to Lord Byron's love and I did not despair of making his acquaintance. I am indeed surprised that I never fell in love with his lordship; but, certain it is, that, though I would have given anything to have been his

most humble friend and servant, his beauty was of a nature never to inspire me with warmer sentiments.

There was nothing whatever voluptuous in the character of it; it was wholly intellectual: and as such I honoured it; but give me for my lover an indolent being who, while he possesses talents and genius to do anything he pleases, pleases himself most and best in pleasing me! *Au reste*, I admire and look up to heroes, but indolent men make the best lovers.

I was a long while before I could convince Lord Byron that as a lover he would never have suited me; and really did not excite any passion in my breast; but, from the moment I had succeeded, his lordship threw off all reserve and wrote and spoke to me with the confidence of easy friendship and good-will, as though he had been delighted to find a woman capable of friendship, to whose vanity it was not at all necessary to administer by saying soft things to her.

CHAPTER XIV

On the Thursday which was to be big with the fate of Livius's farce, I took a party of friends to Mr. Elliston's private box. Drury Lane was crowded. Livius had at least eight people in the small box allotted to him by the manager. He paid me a flying visit and seemed as much agitated as though he were about to be tried for high treason. I proposed changing boxes with him, to accommodate his friends. He was highly delighted, and the exchange was made, much, I believe, to the annoyance of Mr. Elliston, though I knew not why it grieved him.

Livius's piece commenced almost as soon as we were quietly seated again. He was certainly much indebted to the exertions of all the very excellent performers who played in it, particularly Elliston and Harley. The piece went off with spirit. I never saw a poor man tremble as Livius did during the first act. "Who would write for the stage?" thought I. Livius was all over the house at once; both before and behind the scenes. He could not rest anywhere.

"Do sit down," said I, handing him a chair. "Let the public be hanged! What great crime would there be if your little piece happened not to be to their taste?"

"Oh, fancy," said Livius, "the agitation of coming thus before the public for the first time!"

"Fiddlestick!" said I.

He was now growing a little more tranquil, while Elliston was charming away his fears, as well as the *ennui* of the audience. It was at that part where he

expresses his rapture at the beauty and loveliness of his valet's wife, while the unfortunate husband, so well represented by Harley, stands in an agony behind his master's chair, not daring to acknowledge his marriage for fear of losing his place.

The piece to be performed next was *The Coronation.* A man in the pit, at that moment when Elliston ought to have been most pathetic, mounted the boards which were erected down the middle of the pit, I suppose to obtain a better view.

"You must not stand there, sir," vociferated Elliston to the man, in a loud angry voice, in the midst of his love-speech, to the utter dismay of poor Livius, who absolutely gasped for breath.

Sams, who was Livius's publisher, was in my box, and ventured to hiss, which example was followed by a faint vibration from the pit. The valet's wife looked rather silly at being thus cut by her admiring swain. Elliston came forward, as though ashamed of his impetuosity, and, gracefully bowing, addressed the audience somewhat to this effect:

"As manager and proprietor of this theatre, I must request and desire that none of you gentlemen mount those boards," and then, with all the impudence of the most perfect nonchalance, he turned round to his neglected fair one, and resumed his vows of love from where he had left off.

"Elliston is very drunk," said poor Livius, looking as pale as a ghost with dread of what might follow.

"Not so very drunk yet, neither," said I, "since he has to play again, in *The Coronation* to-night."

"Oh!" said Livius, shaking his head mournfully, "Elliston always plays the king most naturally when he is most drunk."

"I have no doubt," answered I, "that Elliston plays his part best when he has been drinking, since he is always so excessively stupid and dull when sober. Except this trifling interruption, your little piece has gone off without a single accident or blunder; so be calm, man!"

Livius told me that he was about to bring out a young lady of infinite talent as a singer. "She is in my private box, and Elliston has promised to hear her best song, from the pit, after the audience have left the house to-night."

I asked if I might remain to hear her.

"Certainly," said Livius, "and for that purpose I will conduct you to a private pit-box. The young lady is to sing on the stage."

Livius's piece was announced for the next night, amidst loud plaudits.

We may guess that Livius naturally had a vast number of his own friends among the audience. It was in fact a very trifling production, and yet it was dramatic. However I never heard of it after it had run its allotted time, though I think I have seen many worse things last longer.

I thought that I too perhaps might find amusement in writing something from the French for the stage—so I, some days afterwards, fixed upon Moliere's comedy of the *Malade Imaginaire*, which I hastily transformed into an English three-act piece.

But I forgot to mention what became of Livius's *protégée*.

After the audience had left the theatre, Livius handed me downstairs to a pit-box, saying, "I must now leave you to attend my poor, timid, young friend." The lamps and candles were all extinguished, when Elliston threw himself along the benches in the pit. Soon afterwards Livius came upon the stage, now lighted by a single lamp, conducting a very ill-favoured young lady in a shawl. She began to sing very scientifically, but her voice was not pleasing. Study had done much for her, while nature had been a niggard.

Elliston appeared to be going to sleep, as soon as he had heard the first verse of a most barbarously long song; but, accidentally observing me, he climbed up to my box from the pit, making a noise, which altogether discouraged the poor young lady by this rude inattention to her melody.

"Why do not you play harlequin?" said I.

"I am too old," he replied: and then asked me how the farce went off.

"Famously," I replied. "I see you know how to profit by my advice, and you made fewer faces. But you took a great liberty with the public, when you began scolding the audience, instead of minding what you were engaged in," I observed to him.

"What business had that man to stick himself up there?" Elliston asked.

"From sympathy! He was looking at a mountebank!"

During the whole of this time, the poor young lady was exerting herself by the light of her solitary lamp, *à pure perte!*

"It is really unmanly," I observed, "to be so unfeelingly inattentive to a beginner, and one of the fair sex."

"Oh!" whispered Elliston, "Livius wants to father all his old sweethearts on me, I believe. I do not allude to this lady," said he, laughing, "it would be a libel on herself, and on mankind, to doubt her respectability; but then she cannot sing, and what is worse, he is going to bring me up three or four more next week."

Oh, *mon Dieu!* it has just occurred to me, that to have told this story of Elliston and Livius, in due time, it ought not to have come in these eight years at soonest; and I must now go back with my Memoirs; but what does it signify to my readers, the story will do as well, and amuse as much now, as later on; and if this book meets due encouragement, I may write something afterwards, with infinitely more regularity.

"It is all settled," said Fanny to me, on the night before Mr. Dick's dinner-party, "and I am to be Mrs. Parker."

"I hope you will be happy," said I; "but I wish you were married."

"Why should poor Parker marry a woman with a ready-made family?" asked Fanny.

I declined offering an opinion, fearing to do harm.

Fanny was four years my senior, and possessed perhaps a larger portion of what is called common sense than myself. *Au reste*, the thing was settled between her and Parker, who were to proceed together to Portsmouth, where Colonel Parker's regiment was stationed, after they had passed a fortnight at Brighton.

"Suppose we make a party, and hire a house for you and Julia and me?"

"The very thing I wish," said Fanny; "for London is growing very stupid. We meet no one but the Hon. Colonel Collyer and Lord Petersham about the streets."

"Oh, yes," said I, "we also see Lady Heathcote and Lady Ann Wyndham."

"And that makes it worse still," added Fanny, "for I really believe neither of those good ladies has missed Hyde Park or the Opera, one single night for the last twenty years, or changed the colour of their chariot blinds; Heathcote, rosy red! and the gentle Ann's interesting yellow! How very tired I am of seeing these women!"

Julia called on me before Fanny had left, and our little excursion to Brighton was fixed for the following week.

When we had settled this important affair, my servant informed me that a lady requested to offer herself in the place of Miss Hawkes, my late *dame de compagnie*, who had just left me to be married to her cousin. I desired him to show her upstairs. She came tripping into the room with the step of a child. She wore short petticoats, and a small French bonnet stuck at the top of her head. I should imagine her age to have been about forty: indeed she owned to six-and-twenty.

"Who will recommend you, pray, madam?"

"The Countess Palmella, wife of the Portuguese

Ambassador, in South Audley Street; I have been educating her children."

I asked if the countess's had been her first situation. She replied in the affirmative.

"What were you doing before that, pray, ma'am?"

"Why," said the lady, with much affectation, "you see I was daily, nay hourly, expecting to get settled in life. I had a small property and I went to Bath. Several of my friends had found charming husbands at Bath. However, time slipped away madam, and by some strange fatality or other I exhausted my little resources, and did not manage to get settled in life: that is the truth of it."

It struck me that this curious woman with the odd bonnet, would amuse me as well as any other lion, *pour le moment*, and being acquainted with Amy's poor beau the Count Palmella, I told her she might come to me the following day.

She seemed absolutely enraptured, as though mine had been an atmosphere which would rain men upon her, and our bargain was concluded. She was a straight, tall, long-backed lath of a woman, with a remarkably long face, small twinkling eyes, fine hair, and a bad skin, in spite of the white paint she used to beautify it. So much for Miss Eliza Higgins.

The next evening found us all quite *rayonnante*, waiting for our dinner in Mr. Dick's elegant drawing-room.

"We will certainly not wait for Mr. Ward," said Dick, looking at his watch.

"To be sure not, who the devil waits for men?" exclaimed Lord Alvanly.

There was a thundering rap at the door, and then entered the Honourable Mr. Ward, looking for all the world like a tobacconist. He was followed by his servant to the very door of the drawing-room. He hoped he had kept nobody waiting.

"To be sure not," said Alvanly, "who the devil would wait for you?"

"I would, all my life, and with all imaginable patience," I observed.

"Ha! ha!" said Ward, growing pale, while he affected to be amused.

"But, my excellent friend Dick," said Ward, "I must send back a note by my servant, who is waiting for it."

"Why," said Dick, "the servants are going to serve the dinner immediately, and I should rather prefer your going into my dressing-room to write your note."

"I thank you," said Ward, with much asperity, "I thank you all the same; but I prefer having the paper here, with your permission. With your permission, mind, Dick!"

"You may ring, if you please," said Dick carelessly, and then, I believe, retired for the express purpose of desiring his footman not to answer the bell. This I only surmise, from his remarking to me in an undertone afterwards, that Ward gave more trouble than all the rest of the party put together, and he was delighted that the footman did not attend his summons.

Mr. Dick handed me down to dinner. Lord Hertford took care of Amy, Alvanly was ever Fanny's most obedient humble servant, and Ward held out his finger to Mrs. Armstrong; because Amy was better provided for Luttrell was, as usual unless some one bored or offended him, the life and spirit of the whole party, when Ward would let him alone; but he was often interrupted by that learned gentleman's bawling from the top to the bottom of a large table, his Latin *bon mots*, at which he himself, *solus*, laughed always most vociferously. He frequently addressed himself to our favourite Luttrell, not being so sure of any other man's Greek and Latin.

"What a misfortune for you," said I to Luttrell, "that the little figure at the top of the table has faith in your classical knowledge," and then, addressing myself to Ward, "Friend," said I, "we, at this end of the table, have all forgotten our Latin."

"Dick!" said Ward, whom I had put out of humour, "there would be no harm in ordering a few coals. I'm starved."

"Why, really," answered Dick, "the fire cannot be better, nor will that grate hold any more coals."

"That's your opinion, not mine;" and Ward affected to laugh, as though he had said something witty.

I praised the very unaffected character of Lord Robert Manners to Nugent, who sat next to me.

"Ah!" squeaked out the reptile Ward, "stand up for Bob Manners, for I know he stands up for you."

"Is that meant for a joke, or a matter of fact?" asked I.

"Fact! Fact! Bob, as your friend no doubt, stands up for you, whom he must so often hear abused."

"What! a mighty member of the senate fighting me, a silly woman, with my own weapons, seriously, and in sober anger, as though I were one of the lords of the creation and a commoner? Then, indeed, I must ask pardon of the honourable member, whom I must have sorely aggrieved. You say my little spitfire, that Lord Robert often hears me abused. All I answer is, look you at the breadth of his shoulders, before you presume to join the hue-and-cry against me in his presence. You would not like a horsepond: *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Keep them to it, keep up the war between them; it is so amusing. Harriette is the only match for Ward I ever met with," whispered Luttrell to my neighbour, his half-brother, Nugent.

"Does anybody mean to go to Elliston's masquerade?" asked Dick.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Armstrong. "It is to be a most brilliant thing, and the stage will exhibit all the decorations of Aladdin's Lamp, and I know not what besides; no dominoes, and a most comfortable, excellent supper."

"I dare not go," said Alvanly. "I am always afraid of getting into a row, at these sort of places and having to fight."

"Apropos of fighting," said I. "Your lordship, if I remember, was formerly in the Guards, I think? Why did you leave that regiment?"

"Why, I was afraid of being shot," said Alvanly, very quietly.

"But were you not also afraid of being called a coward?" I asked.

"I was in two engagements, and distinguished myself in each," Alvanly replied.

"How, pray?" said the stiff John Mills, of the Guards, whom, though I believe he had served in Spain with Alvanly, I did not think worth a place in my Memoirs.

"I do not mean to say that I ever volunteered anything," said Alvanly, pulling up the collar of his shirt; "but, at the same time, I never ran away, you know. They did not reward me for my services as I expected. However, I am quite contented to have retired on half-pay. God bless your soul," continued his lordship, addressing himself to me, "you have no idea what it is! Come on, my brave fellows. This is fine fun, my lads. You are obliged to find courage for yourself and your men too! I mentioned to two or three officers at the time of action, that, if it should please God to see me safe out of that, I would give the enemy leave to cut off my head, if I did not sell out of the army or retire on half-pay the moment I arrived in England. The fact is, I have had the same antipathy to the idea of fighting from a child, and I never should have gone into the Guards at all, if I had imagined they would have left London."

"Alvanly, shall I have the pleasure of drinking wine with you?" asked Lord Hertford, from the top of the table.

Alvanly assented of course.

"Madeira?" asked Dick, handing Alvanly the bottle.

"No; champagne, if you please. I can get madeira at home," said Alvanly.

We women then entered the drawing-room, to which Mr. Dick conducted us himself.

Poor Julia scarcely spoke a single word the whole evening; indeed we had the greatest difficulty in persuading her to be of our party. She declared she could not endure to meet Amy, who had been making love to Mildmay merely because Julia adored him. Mildmay had paid due attention to Amy's ogling, had basked in the sunshine of her smiles for nearly a fortnight, and then, just as she was growing tender, had cut her dead. Amy, seized with an unusual fit of frankness, showed me Sir Henry's last letter, in which he begged to be excused coming to her *pour le moment:* he was particularly engaged for the whole of next week.

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*" said I, after reading this very impertinent letter, addressed to a fine woman who had done him too much honour. "How can you all encourage this cold-blooded heartless creature? Do pray let me write your answer directly, and you shall copy it. It will set poor Julia's mind at rest, and keep up, more or less, the dignity of the sex!"

"I wish you would," answered Amy, "for I hate him; but, as to Julia, it's nonsense her sticking up for Mildmay, he only laughs at the idea."

Julia began to shed tears at Amy's coarse remarks, and I wrote as follows, which Amy copied, and delivered into my hands to be forwarded to the gay baronet the next morning.

"My dear Sir Harry,—I have ten thousand apologies to make to you, for being the most careless creature on earth! Your letter of this morning was brought to me just as I was writing to that angel Ponsonby; and, before I could read the first line of your effusion, my servant brought me two more notes; so, in my bustle and confusion, I am afraid yours must have been the piece of paper I took up to light my taper with; for, though I desired my maid to make strict search after it before I went out, she informed me in the evening that it was not to be found. No matter, I give you credit for having said

an infinity of soft things, and wish it were in my power *de vous rendre les pareilles.* Not that but I entertain a severe esteem for you; to prove which were I not about to leave town for Brighton, I should entreat you to continue your visits; but I am so unlucky as to have my time taken up entirely just now. On my return, I hope to be more fortunate, and if so, I shall certainly do myself the pleasure of sending you a card. In the meantime Sir Harry will, I hope, believe me, like all the rest of my sex, deeply impressed with his merits,

"and most truly and faithfully his servant,

"AMY SYDENHAM."

Julia recovered her spirits as soon as this letter was in my possession, signed and sealed, for she knew Mildmay too well to imagine he would forgive any one who wounded his self-love.

"You will be surprised to hear that I have left your sister Sophia at home," said Julia.

We asked Julia about Lord Deerhurst; and she told us that Sophia felt herself so neglected and uncomfortable, and disgusted with her lodging, that she had entreated Julia to take her as a boarder, and to which she had that morning consented.

Amy asked Julia why she did not bring Sophia with her.

"In the first place," answered Julia, "I have passed my word to your mother that Sophia shall not go out except to walk with my own children; and, in the second she was not invited."

The gentlemen joined us soon afterwards.

The first thing Alvanly did was to break one of Mr. Dick's looking-glasses, while playing some trick or other with a stick.

Dick grew sulky and declared that, since the honour of his lordship's company was to be so expensive, he must decline it.

Alvanly said he was really sorry; but could not insult Mr. Dick by buying him another.

Dick assured him he was not touchy.

"Oh, yes," said Alvanly, "you will give yourself a good character of course; but I shall not impose upon your goodness by doing anything half so rude."

As soon as we had taken our tea and coffee, we all went to the King's Theatre; but before Lord Hertford parted with us, he invited the females of this party to dinner.

We declared that we were going to Brighton and had no time.

"Name your own day," said Lord Hertford; "to-morrow if you please; but come you must."

"It shall be to-morrow, then," said Amy, replying for us all.

"What a fine thing it is to be an elder sister," said I. I thought Amy could never have recovered her temper.

Lord Hertford, before he left us, politely offered to send a carriage for my sisters.

I found the Duke of Leinster in my box.

"I am glad you have no men with you," said His Grace, with something like agitation of manner; "for I want to speak to you. Do you know, my friend, of whom I spoke to you, is come up from Oxford on purpose to try to get introduced. I know he must return to college to-night, and I am, I confess, rather anxious that he should be disappointed."

"Nonsense," said Julia. "Who is it pray?"

"The Marquis of Worcester," replied His Grace.

"Is he handsome?" I inquired.

"Not a bit of it," said the duke.

"What is he like?" Fanny asked.

"I do not know anybody he is like, upon my honour, unless it be his father. He is a long, thin pale fellow, with straight hair."

"You need not be alarmed," said I, "I shall not be presented to your friend if I can help it. I always tell everybody I know, not to bring men here without first coming to ask my permission."

"I know you do," said Leinster; "since this is the

answer Lord Worcester has received from several of your friends to whom he applied."

"There he is!" continued Leinster, leaning towards the pit. "Do not you observe a very tall young fellow in silk stockings, looking steadfastly up at this box. Upon my honour he won't wear trousers or curl his hair; because he heard that you dislike it."

"It is very flattering," said I, eagerly looking out for him with my opera-glass, an example which was followed by Julia and Fanny.

The young marquis was at that time too bashful to stand the artillery of three pair of fine eyes at once, and turned away from our eager gaze; but not till I had satisfied myself that he would not do for me one bit better than his uncle, Lord G. L. Gower: and, in the next five minutes, I had forgotten his existence.

Lord Frederick Bentinck now came and asked me when I meant to keep my promise of accompanying him to Vauxhall.

"Oh, we shall never get to Brighton," said Fanny, who doted on donkey-riding. "Harriette will keep us in town all the summer, as she did last year."

"Summer!" interposed George Brummell, entering in a furred great coat. "You do not mistake this for summer, do you? A little more of your summer will just finish me," pulling up his fur collar.

"Upon my honour, I think it very hot," said Leinster. "It must be hot, you know, because it is August."

"I never know the difference, for my part," Fred Bentinck observed. "The only thing that ever makes me cold is putting on a great coat; but then I have always a great deal to do, and that keeps me warm. Once for all madam, will you go to Vauxhall on Monday night? If you will I will put off my sister and accompany you."

I assented, in spite of everything Fanny and Julia could say to prevent me; for Fred Bentinck always made me merry.

"What is Lord Molyneux doing with Mrs. Fitzroy

Stanhope?" said I, looking towards that lady's box, where she sat *tête-à-tête* with his lordship.

"How fond you are of scandal!" observed Fred Bentinck.

"Oh Lord, no," answered I, "on the contrary, I admire her taste. Who would not cut the very best swaggering Stanhope for a Molyneux?"

"Where do you expect to go to, Harriette?" said Bentinck, for at least the twentieth time since I had known him.

"To Amy's to-night, to Lord Hertford's to-morrow, and to Vauxhall on Monday," I replied.

"And then to Brighton, I hope," continued Fanny.

"We must see Elliston's masquerade first," said I.

"A very respectable exhibition, indeed," observed Bentinck.

"Oh! I never unmask, and nobody will find me out; but I've a natural turn for masquerading, and go I must."

King Allen put his long nose into the box, and his nose only. "Is Amy at home to-night?"

Fanny answered in the affirmative; adding, "But she is in her own box. Why do not you go to her to inquire?"

"Lord Lowther and some nasty Russians are with her," answered Allen.

"*A ce soir*, then," I said, kissing my hand to him, which was as much as to say, do not come in. He was kind enough to understand my hint.

Lord Molyneux shortly took his seat by my side, and I rated him about Mrs. Fitzroy.

"Remember Monday," said Fred Bentinck, as he left the box to make room for Mr. Napier and Colonel Parker, followed by the young Lord William Russell.

Lord Molyneux seemed to take pleasure in chatting with me, without desiring a nearer intimacy; and I was always very glad to see and laugh with his lordship. When he left me, Lord William began to whisper and stammer out something about the folly

he was guilty of in coming to me as he did, and encouraging hopes which he knew would end in disappointment.

"You do not know any such thing," returned I.

"What have I," continued Lord William, "to recommend myself to your notice? A poor little wretch without either fortune or wit."

I told him that he was well-looking, high-bred, and high-born. I felt really desirous to encourage the most humble, little gentleman-like being I ever met with.

Just as Parker and Napier had left the box, Lord Deerhurst entered it, accompanied by a tall young man, and Lord William then took his leave, from the mere dread of intruding. "I do not often introduce gentlemen to ladies," said his lordship, "and perhaps I am taking a liberty now; yet I hope you can have no objection to my making you known to the Marquis of Worcester."

I bowed rather formally; because I had before desired Deerhurst not to bring people to me without my permission. However the young marquis blushed so deeply, and looked so humble, that it was impossible to treat him with incivility; but, having taken one good look at my conquest, and thus convinced myself that I should never love him, I conversed indifferently on common subjects, as people do who happen to meet in a stage-coach, where time present is all they have to care about. Deerhurst was lively and pleasant; the marquis scarcely spoke; but the little he did find courage to utter, was certainly said with good taste and in a gentlemanly manner.

Leinster was infinitely bored and annoyed, though he tried to conceal it.

"What do you think of him?" asked Leinster, whispering in my ear.

"I will tell you to-morrow," I replied; and, the better to enable myself to do this, I examined the person of the young marquis for the second time.

It promised to be very good, and his air and manners were distinguished; but he was extremely pale and rather thin; nevertheless, there was something fine and good about his countenance, though he was certainly not handsome.

Deerhurst invited the Duke of Leinster to go into the pit with him.

Leinster hesitated.

I understood him. "Do not be afraid," said I, in his ear. "Of course, having already engaged you to take me to my carriage, I shall neither change my mind nor break my word."

Leinster gratefully grasped my hand, but fixed his eyes on Worcester, still hesitating. Not that it was His Grace's nature to break his ducal heart for any woman, and still less perhaps for me; but a man's schoolfellow pushing himself forwards, and trying to cut him out where he had formed high expectations, is always a bore, even to the coldest man alive.

"Of course my sister Amy will be happy to see Lord Worcester to-night," said I aloud, in answer to what I read in Leinster's countenance.

Lord Worcester bowed, and looked rather confused than pleased.

"Do come, my lord," said Fanny, who liked what she had seen of his lordship extremely.

To Leinster's joy and our astonishment, Lord Worcester said he must really decline my very polite offer, grateful as he felt for it.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Deerhurst. "What a very odd fellow you are! I really cannot make you out. I give you my honour, Harriette," continued his lordship, "that, not an hour ago, he declared he would give half his existence to sit near you and talk to you for an hour, and now you invite him to pass the evening in your society, he appears to be frightened to death at the idea!"

"You are all alike; a set of cruel wicked deceivers," said I, carelessly, being really indifferent as to the impression it made on Lord Worcester, who, in his

eagerness to exculpate himself from this charge of caprice, blushed deeply and evinced considerable agitation.

"No indeed, I beg, I do entreat that you will not, you must not imagine this. I have a particular reason for not going to your sister's; but it would be impertinent in a stranger like me to take up your time by an explanation: only pray acquit me. Do not send me away so very unhappy; for you must know, I am sure you must, that the indifference of which you accuse me would be impossible, quite impossible, to any man."

"What is the matter with you, young gentleman?" said I, looking at him with much curiosity, "and why do you lay such a stress on trifles light as air?"

"To you, perhaps," observed Worcester, trying to laugh, from a fear of seeming ridiculous.

"There is a pretty race-horse little head for you!" said Deerhurst, touching my hair.

"I never saw such beautiful hair," Worcester remarked timidly.

"Put your fingers into it," said Deerhurst. "Harriette does not mind how you tumble her hair about."

"I should richly deserve to be turned out of the box were I to do anything so very impertinent," interrupted his lordship.

"Oh, no," said I, leaning the back of my little head towards Worcester, "anybody may pull my hair about. I like it, and I am no prude."

Worcester ventured to touch my hair in fear and trembling, and the touch seemed to affect him like electricity. Without vanity, and in very truth, let him deny it if he can, I never saw a boy or a man more madly, wildly, and romantically in love with any daughter of Eve in my whole life.

"Come with me," said Deerhurst to Leinster.

"Remember your promise," Leinster whispered to me, as he unwillingly followed his lordship.

"May I," said Lord Worcester eagerly, as though

he dreaded an interruption, "may I, on my return to town, venture to pay my respects?"

"Certainly," answered I, "if I am in town; but we are going to Brighton."

True love is ever thus respectful, and fearful to offend. Worcester, with much modesty, conversed on subjects unconnected with himself or his desires, apparently taking deep interest in my health, which, I assured him, had long been very delicate.

Just before the curtain dropped, Worcester seemed again eager to say something on his refusal to accompany me to Amy's.

"Leinster is coming to take you to your carriage, I know," said he, "and I wish——"

"What do you wish?"

"That you would permit me to explain something to you, and promise not to call me a conceited coxcomb."

"Yes! I'll answer for her," said Fanny, "so out with it, my lord. Why be afraid of that great black-eyed sister of mine, as if she were of so much consequence?"

"Well then," continued Worcester, blushing deeply, "Lord Deerhurst told me that your sister treated you unkindly, and that you never allowed your favourites to visit her. Upon my honour, I would rather never see you again, than pay my court to anybody who has behaved ill to you."

Before I could reply Leinster came hurrying and bustling into the box as the curtain dropped.

"You return to Oxford to-night, I believe?" said His Grace to Worcester, who replied that he must start at six in the morning.

I advised him to take a few hours rest first.

"That will be quite impossible," Worcester answered in a low voice.

The young marquis's pale face certainly did grow paler, as he looked wistfully after Leinster, whose arm I had taken.

First love is all powerful in the head and heart of

such an ardent character as Worcester's; and there really was an air of truth about him, which not a little affected me for the moment; therefore, turning back to address him, after I had drawn my arm away from Leinster,—"Perhaps," said I, in a low, laughing voice, "perhaps, Lord Worcester, it may be vain and silly in me to believe that you are disposed to like me; but, as I do almost fancy so, I am come to wish you a good night, and to assure you that I shall remember your taking up my quarrels against my unkind sister, with the gratitude I always feel towards those who are charitable enough to think favourably of me."

Worcester began to look too happy.

"But do not mistake me," I continued, "for I am not one bit in love with you."

Worcester looked humble again.

"In fact," said I, laughing, "my love-days are over. I have loved nothing lately."

"Not the Duke of Leinster?" inquired his lordship, whose anxiety to ascertain this had overcome his fears of seeming impertinent.

"No, indeed," I rejoined, and Worcester's countenance brightened, till he became almost handsome.

Leinster approached us with a look of extreme impatience.

"Good night, my lord," said I, waving my hand, as I joined His Grace. Worcester bowed low and hastened out of sight.

"If Leinster were not my friend," said Worcester to a gentleman who afterwards repeated it to me, pointing to Leinster and myself, as we stood in the round room waiting for His Grace's carriage; "if that young man were not my friend, I would make him walk over my dead body before he should take Harriette out of this house."

Oh, this love! this love!

Amy's rooms were not full. It was her last party for that season. There was nobody in town, so, *faute de mieux*, since Mildmay had cut her, she was making

up to a Mr. Boultby, a black, little, ugly dragoon, whom she declared was exactly to her taste.

"Come to Brighton," said Amy to her hero.

He assured her that, if his regiment had not been stationed there, he would have joined her, since he felt that he could not live out of her smiles.

"How can you strive to make fools of people?" said I.

"What do you mean?" inquired Amy fiercely.

"Why, seriously, Mr. Boultby," continued I, "take my word, she has no fancy for you."

Mr. Boultby's vanity would not permit him to take my word, so I left him to the enjoyment of it.

Parker and Fanny appeared to be very happy together, and sincerely attached to each other. No husband could show more respect towards any wife.

Leinster was very dull, though too proud to complain.

"Confess," said I to His Grace, as soon as I could get him into one corner of the room," confess that you are annoyed and unhappy about Lord Worcester."

"I do think," said Leinster, "though I do not pretend to have any claim on you whatever, that Worcester, as my friend, had no right to intrude himself into your society to-night."

"Never mind, don't bore me with your jealousy; I abhor it," said I, "I must and will be free, as free as the air, to do whatever I like. I always told you so, and never professed to be in love with you. However, I still like you as well as I like anybody else, and, as to Lord Worcester, what shall I see of him, while he is at Oxford, and I at Brighton, to which place I did not invite him."

"I do not see why Worcester thought proper to blush as he did to-night, and pretend to be so over modest, while he was doing such a cool, impudent thing," muttered Leinster.

"Dear me, how tiresome," said I, yawning. "I

should almost have forgotten all about Lord Worcester by this time, if you had made yourself agreeable."

The evening finished heavily for me. I was bored with Leinster, who never had anything on earth to recommend him to my notice, save that excellent temper, which I now saw ruffled for the first time since I had known him: and Amy, who, it must be acknowledged was in the habit of saying droll things, was this night wholly taken up and amused with that stupid, ugly Boultby! I therefore returned early, and Leinster put me down at my own door.

CHAPTER XV

THE next day I proposed to my new *dame de compagnie*, Miss Eliza Higgins, to dress herself quickly, in order to accompany me into the park.

"How do you do? how do you do?" said Lord Fife, as he joined us near Cumberland Gate. "Who is your friend?" he continued, appearing to eye Miss Higgins with looks of admiration, much to my astonishment. "Am I not to be introduced to your friend?"

"*Et pourquoi pas?*" said I, naming Miss Higgins, with whom he conversed, as though her acquaintance had been the thing on earth most devoutly to be wished.

"What a funny little bonnet you have got on!" said his lordship to my companion, interrupting himself in the middle of a long story from the North.

After Lord Fife had left us, Miss Eliza Higgins could speak of nothing else.

"Charming man, ma'am, the Earl of Fife! I have heard much of him; but never had the honour to be presented to him before. That is a man now, a poor weak female would find it very difficult to resist. His Lordship is so condescending! so polite!"

When we were tired of walking in the park, I drove to the house of a married sister of mine, whose name we will call Paragon, since she was the very paragon of mothers, having drawn up a new, patent system of education for her children, better than Jean Jacques Rousseau's, and unlike everybody's else.

Her family consists of two boys and two girls. The eldest daughter was then nearly seven years of

age: her son and heir had scarcely attained his fifth year. "They shall never go to school," said my sister Paragon, "nor will I suffer them to be left one instant to the care of nurses or servants, to learn bad grammar and worse morals. Neither shall they be told of such things as thieves or murderers; much less shall they hear anything about falsehood and deceit. They shall never obtain what they want by tears nor rudeness after the age of two; and it shall depend on the politeness and humility of their deportment, whether they have any dinner or not; and nothing shall be called indecent which is natural, either in words or deeds. So much for the minds of my children; and, with regard to their bodily health, I shall make them swallow one of Anderson's Scot's Aperient Pills every night of their blessed lives! *et il n'y aura rien à craindre!*"

Sister Paragon was very pretty. She had the sweetest, most lovely eyes I ever beheld: and not because they were large, or of the finest hazel colour; I allude to their character and expression; now flashing with indignation, now soft, and yet so bright that one might almost see one's own reflected in them. Paragon's little nose too was very pretty, even when red and frost-bitten; and she had a beautiful mole on her clear brown cheek. She did not at all resemble either a paragon or a prude; and yet I am the only one of all our family who am not afraid of her wit or her virtue. She married a gentleman of good family and connections, though poor; and, when she did this, she almost broke the tender heart of the reverend Orange patriot, Sir Harcourt Lees, baronet, of Irish notoriety, who had often proposed to her on his knees, and on his—seat, and with his whole heart! "He was a good little fellow," Paragon would often say, "but his face was so like a knocker!"

C'est bien dommage!

Paragon's husband was not in London when I called on her. She was sitting with four of the most lovely children I ever beheld at one time. Her eldest

daughter was almost as beautiful as our mother, whose equal I never saw nor shall see on earth. She had her mother's eye, her grandmother's nose, and her nice little aunt Harriette's curly brown hair. Then she was so graceful, and spoke such good French!

"Mary!" said Paragon to her daughter, as soon as she had shaken hands with me, and inquired after my health, "Mary, come away from the window directly. Fie! for shame! Do not you see those two men at the corner of the street are tipsy? Is that a proper sight to attract a young's lady's attention?"

Little Mary was in high spirits. She talked of love! and said she knew, very well, that everybody fell in love, and that she was in love, too, herself.

"With whom, pray?" asked Paragon.

"With my brother John," answered little Mary; and next she asked her mother, when she might marry him, declaring that she could not wait much longer.

"To bed! to bed!" said mamma. "You must all go to bed directly."

"Already?" I asked. "Why it is not six o'clock yet."

"No matter. I am tired to death of them, and they are always asleep before seven."

In less than five minutes the children were all running about stark naked as they were born, laughing, romping, and playing with each other. Little Sophia, who was not yet two years of age, did nothing but run after her beautiful brother Henry, a dear, little, laughing boy, who was about to celebrate his fourth birthday. Little Sophia, bred in the school of nature, handled her brother rather oddly, I thought.

Paragon then put them to bed, gave them a Scotchman, in the shape of a pill, and all was still as the grave!

"Good night, my dear Paragon," said I. "Lord Hertford dines at eight, and I shall not be ready."

"I saw you at the opera, last night," Paragon remarked, "and truly it was an unfair monopoly, to keep two such fine young men as Lord Worcester

and the Duke of Leinster to yourself. I admire the latter of all things; so you may send Leinster to me, if you prefer Lord Worcester."

"How wicked!" said I. "If ever you, with such a beautiful young family, were to go astray, you must despair of forgiveness."

"Very fine talking," answered Paragon. "So you would score off your own sins, by a little cut-and-dried advice which costs you nothing."

Her son and heir interrupted her at this moment, by such hard breathing as almost amounted to a snore.

"That boy has caught cold!" observed mamma, and she awoke him to administer an extra Scotchman.

"Good-bye, good-bye," said I, running downstairs; and when I got home, I had only ten minutes left *pour faire ma toilette.* As to Miss Eliza Higgins, Lord Fife's compliments had so subdued her, that she could not afford me the least assistance.

"A charming man, the Earl of Fife!" she was repeating, for at least the fiftieth time, when a note was put into my hand bearing the noble earl's arms, and my footman at that moment informed me that my carriage was at the door.

"Any answer for Lord Fife, ma'am?" asked my servant.

I hastily read the note, which contained his lordship's request to pass the evening with me and my lovely companion. I did not show this to Miss Higgins on that occasion, because it seemed so very *outré* and unhoped for that I feared it might from the mere surprise have caused sudden death.

"My compliments only," said I; "tell his lordship I am very sorry, but I cannot write, because I am this instant getting into my carriage to dine with Lord Hertford:" and so saying I followed my servant downstairs.

Lord Hertford had not invited one person to meet us; but his excellent dinner, good wine, and very

LORD HERTFORD

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intelligent conversation, kept us alive till a very late hour. I mean no compliment to Lord Hertford, for he has acted very rudely to me of late; but he is a man possessing more general knowledge than any one I know. His lordship appears to be *au fait* on every subject one can possibly imagine. Talk to him of drawing or horse-riding; painting or cock-fighting; rhyming, cooking or fencing; profligacy or morals; religion of whatever creed; languages living or dead; claret or burgundy; champagne or black-strap; furnishing houses or riding hobbies; the flavour of venison or breeding poll-parrots; and you might swear that he had served his apprenticeship to every one of them.

After dinner he showed us miniatures by the most celebrated artists, of at least half a hundred lovely women, black, brown, fair, and even carroty, for the amateur's sympathetic *bonne bouche.* These were all beautifully executed: and no one with any knowledge of painting could hear him expatiate on their various merits, without feeling that he was qualified to preside at the Royal Academy itself! The light, the shade, the harmony of colours, the vice of English painters, the striking characters of Dutch artists—*Ma foi!* No such thing as foisting sham Vandykes, or copies from Rubens, on Lord Hertford, as I believe is done, or as I am sure might be done, on the Duke of Devonshire: and yet His Grace, I rather fancy, must be in the habit of sending advertisements to the newspapers relative to his taste in *vertu* and love of the arts. If not, how comes it that everybody hears of Devonshire pictures of his own choosing, while Lord Hertford's most correct judgment never graces those diurnal columns. His lordship does not buy them, either by so much a hundred or so much a foot; but if the town did not talk about Devonshire's pictures, Devonshire's fortune, and Devonshire's parties, he would be a blank in the creation. Once indeed he was slandered with bastardy; but that passed off quietly, as it ought to do; for who would have made it their

pastime to beget such a lump of unintelligible matter. Though surely that's enough for a duke, were it even a Wellington. Not that a man is to blame for being stupid, be he duke or tinker; but then Devonshire is so incorrigibly affected and stingy withal! I remember his calling on me and pretending to make love to me; and, with an air of condescension and protection, asking me in what way he could serve me. For my part I am always inclined to judge of others by my own heart; I therefore took him at his word, believing that a man of such princely fortune would not, unasked, proffer his services to anybody to whom he was not disposed to send a few hundreds when they should require it. Being some time afterwards in such a predicament, and having promised to apply to him, I sent to him for a hundred guineas. His Grace begged to be excused sending so large a sum, at the same time assuring me that a part of it was at my service.

Oh, what a fine thing is the patronage of mighty dukes!

Apropos. I must not be ungrateful. The most noble, I ought to say the most gracious, the Duke of Devonshire once sent me two presents! The one, in a parcel, wrapped up in fine paper and sealed with the Devonshire arms.

"A parcel, madam!" said my footman, "and the Duke of Devonshire's servant waits while you acknowledge the receipt of it."

The parcel contained a very ugly, old, red pocket-handkerchief! His Grace, in the note which accompanied this most magnificent donation, acknowledged that it was hideous; but then, he assured me, it was the self-same which he had worn on his breast when he made it serve for an under-waistcoat, on the occasion of his visit to me the day before. This however was not all. In the warmth of his heart he sent me a ring too! I think it must have been bought at Lord Deerhurst's jewellers, and yet perhaps it was gold, instead of brass; but such a mere wire, that it could

not weigh a shilling's-worth. Still, had it been of brass, and the gift of a friend who loved me, I should have worn it as long as it had lasted; but, being that of the Duke of Devonshire, who cared nothing about me, I sent it him back, to punish his vanity, in supposing that trifles light as air could be prized by me, because they came from him. As to his ugly, old, red pocket-handkerchief, I gave it to my footman, and told the donor that I had done so.

But, to proceed.

Lord Hertford showed us a vast collection of gold and silver coins, portraits, drawings, curious snuff-boxes and watches. He had long been desirous that Amy, Fanny, and myself should sit to Lawrence, for a large family-picture, to be placed in his collection.

Though the tea and coffee, like our dinner, were exquisite, Hertford made a good-natured complaint to his French commander-in-chief about the cream.

"Really," said his lordship, addressing us in English, "for a man who keeps a cow, it is a great shame to be served with such bad cream!"

"I knew not," said I, "that you were the man who kept a cow. Pray where is she?"

"In Hyde Park," he replied, "just opposite my windows."

Lord Hertford then proposed to show us a small detached building, which he had taken pains to fit up in a very luxurious style of elegance. A small, low gate, of which he always kept the key, opened into Park Lane, and a little, narrow flight of stairs, covered with crimson cloth, conducted to this retirement. It consisted of a dressing-room, a small sitting-room, and a bed-chamber. Over the elegant French bed was a fine picture of a sleeping Venus. There were a great many other pictures, and their subjects, though certainly warm and voluptuous, were yet too classical and graceful to merit the appellation of indecent. He directed our attention to the convenience of opening the door himself to any fair lady who would honour him with a visit *incognita*, after his servants should have

prepared a most delicious supper and retired to rest. He told us many curious anecdotes of the advantage he derived from his character for discretion.

"I never tell of any woman. No power on earth should induce me to name a single female, worthy to be called woman, by whom I have been favoured. In the first place; because I am not tired of variety and wish to succeed again: in the second, I think it dishonourable."

He told us a story of a lady of family, well known in the fashionable world, whose intrigue with a young dragoon he had discovered by the merest and most unlooked-for accident. "I accused her of the fact," continued his lordship, "and refused to promise secrecy till she had made me as happy as she had made the young dragoon."

"Was this honourable?" I asked.

"Perhaps not," answered Hertford; "but I could not help it."

We did not leave Lord Hertford till near two o'clock, when he kindly set us all down himself in his own carriage.

The next morning, before I had finished my breakfast, a great, big, stupid Irishman was announced, by name Dominick Brown, with whom I had a slight acquaintance. He brought with him, for the purpose of being presented to me, the Marquis of Sligo. They sat talking on indifferent subjects for about an hour, and then drove off in his lordship's curricle. Next came a note from Lord Fife, requesting permission to drink tea with me and my charming friend. "Who would have thought it?" said I to myself, laughing. "Here am I playing second fiddle to Miss Eliza Higgins for the amusement of her most charming man, the Earl of Fife!" I wrote on the back of his note:

"Going to Vauxhall; but you may come to-morrow evening at nine."

I thought that Miss Eliza Higgins would have

fainted when I told her that Lord Fife was coming to us.

"Oh dear, ma'am, what would you advise me to wear? If you would not think it a liberty, and would lend me the pattern of your sweet blue cap, I would sit up all night to complete one like it."

"All this energy about drinking tea with a rake of a Scotchman,—whom you know would not marry an angel,—and pretend to tell me that you are *une grande vertu?*" said I.

"Certainly," answered Miss Eliza Higgins, reddening.

"Fiddlestick!" was my sublime ejaculation.

Miss Eliza Higgins burst into tears.

"Nay," I continued, "this fit of heroics to me is ridiculous. I ask nothing of you but plain dealing. The fact is this, I am not curious but frank. Lord Fife wants to make your acquaintance, and it is not my wish to spoil any woman's preferment in whatever line of life, whether good or bad: so, guessing from all the raptures you have expressed at the idea of this rake's attachment, that the governess of the young countess Palmella is no better than she should be, I have agreed to receive his lordship; but, since these tears of virtuous indignation have convinced me of the injustice I did you, heaven forbid that I should be the means of bringing Lord Fife and a vestal together, for fear of consequences!" I then quietly opened my writing-desk and began framing an excuse to his lordship.

"Surely you are not putting off the Earl of Fife?" said Miss Eliza Higgins, in breathless agitation.

"I think it wrong to introduce such a gay man to an innocent woman," was my answer.

Miss Higgins entreated and begged in vain.

"Well then," said Miss Higgins, "I confess that I once——"

"Once what?" I asked.

"I had a slip—a—yes—a slip!" And she held her handkerchief to her eyes.

"What do you call a slip? Do you mean a petticoat or an intrigue!"

"Oh, fie! fie!" said Miss Eliza Higgins. "Intrigue is such a shocking word, and conveys a more determined idea of loose morals than a mere accidental slip."

I still persisted in sending the excuse, declaring that, since hers had been only an accidental slip, she might recover it.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" said Miss Higgins, as my hand was extended to the bell, "what poor weak creatures we are! I quite forgot the General!"

"General who?"

"Why, General—, but you will be secret?"

"As the grave, of course."

"Did you ever hear of General Mackenzie?" said Miss Eliza Higgins, spreading her hand across her forehead.

"He was Fred Lamb's General in Yorkshire?" I answered.

"The same, madam, a fascinating man! and this is my excuse."

"True," said I, "and I remember all the servant maids and Yorkshire milkwomen confessed his power."

"Most true!" said Miss Eliza Higgins, with a deep sigh.

"What then, you have forgotten the Earl of Fife already?"

"Oh, his lordship is quite another thing," said Miss Higgins, brightening.

"And another thing is what you wish for?"

"Oh fie, ma'am! indeed you are too severe. These little accidents do and must happen, from mere inexperience and the weakness of our nature. I know several women, who have made most excellent wives after a slip or two, which I assure you madam often serves to fortify our virtue afterwards."

"Well, then," said I, resuming my pen, "lest the gay Lord Fife should break through the formidable

bulwark of virtue which has been already fortified by two intrigues, I shall most positively send him an excuse."

"I entreat, I implore, ma'am, do not refuse my first request, Who knows what may turn up?" In short never was Brougham himself more eloquent! Not even on that memorable day when he was employed by Lord Charles Bentinck to show just cause why Lady Abdy ought to have cuckolded Sir William as she did. She ultimately prevailed; and all-conquering Fife was expected with rapture.

Before dinner I went to call on Julia, by whom I had been sent for. Extreme anxiety had brought on a *fausse couche;* but Julia, being as well as could be expected, hoped still to be able to join us at Brighton, if not to accompany us there. My sister Sophia was sitting by her bedside, looking very pretty, and much happier than when she was with Lord Deerhurst.

Fanny called on Julia, whose house she had changed for one in Hertford-street, Mayfair, on her acquaintance with Colonel Parker, whose name at his particular request she had now taken.

"My dear Fanny," said I, "what am I to do with your boy George? We shall never make a scholar of him, and he declares that he will not be a sailor"

"Flog him! Flog him!" said Amy, who overheard what I was saying,as she entered the room accompanied by a man in powder. "I flog my boy Campbell every hour in the day."

I never saw such a man in all my life as her powdered swain. "I too am for flogging," said he, "since, such as you see me here before you, I am become by mere dint of birch."

"*Dieu nous en preserve!*" said I, hurrying into my carriage. Having reached home too early for dinner, I sat down to consider the plan of a book in the style of the *Spectator*, a kind of picnic, where every wiseacre might contribute his mite of knowledge at so much a head, provided he and she would sign their real names to the paper.

Having imagined myself to be a wild lad, like my young scamp of a nephew, addressing a second *Rambler* or *Spectator*, whom I ventured to name Momus, I addressed as follows:

"Mr. Momus,—I am one of those unfortunate victims whose hard fate was decided before I was born, and *bon gré, mal gré*, I must become a prodigy of learning. Now, Mr. Momus, I have to inform you that, notwithstanding I love my parents above all the world, yet I abhor and detest everything in the way of study. Floggings, rewards, private tutors and public schools, have all been tried in vain; and, though I am at fifteen becoming somewhat hardened against my father's harsh sarcasms on my stupidity, yet fain would I exert myself to dry up the tears my poor mother often sheds, for the disappointment of her sanguine wishes on my account; but for the strong conviction I feel that it is as impossible to acquire a taste for study, as to benefit by a forced application to books.

"'Learn, oh youth,' says Zimmerman, one of my tutor's favourite authors, 'learn, oh young man! that nothing will so easily subdue your passion for pleasure as an increasing emulation in great and virtuous actions, a hatred to idleness and frivolity, the study of the sciences, and that high and dignified spirit, which looks with disdain, on everything that is vile and contemptible.'

"All very fine old boy, and clear as the nose in your face. A hatred of idleness, Mr. Zimmerman, is a love of industry; but how is this love and this hatred to be acquired? '*Voilà*,' said a French matron to Monsieur le Duc de ——, at Paris, throwing open the doors of an elegant apartment, '*Voilà la chambre où l'on*' . . . '*Mais, où est la chambre où l'on*—?' said the duke.

"'Try solitude,' says Zimmerman—

"My father has tried that too, and it failed—but

then, Zimmerman continues, 'for solitude to produce these happy effects it is not sufficient to be continually gazing out of a window with a vacant mind, nor gravely walking up and down your study, in a ragged *robe de chambre* and worn-out slippers. The soul must feel an eager desire to roam at large.'

"Now, Mr. Zimmerman, as far as regards a new pair of slippers and a clean dressing-gown, your advice has been duly attended to; but my mind is not the less vacant, whether I gaze out of window, walk, or sit down; therefore, Mr. Momus, I now entreat you to favour me with your candid opinion, whether a fool can be teased into a genius, or a genius into a fool? It strikes me, on the contrary, that, under every imaginable disadvantage, a man will contrive to improve himself where the taste for study be genuine, and, where it does not exist, compulsion will but add disgust to what was before only indifference.

"My tutor read to me this morning, an anecdote of Petrarch, the celebrated Italian poet. One of Petrarch's friends, the Bishop of Cavaillon, being alarmed lest the intense application with which he studied might totally ruin a constitution already much impaired, requested of him one day the key of his library. Petrarch immediately gave it him, and the good bishop instantly locking up his books and writings, said, 'Petrarch, I hereby interdict you from the use of pen, ink, and paper, for the space of ten days.' The sentence was severe; but the offender suppressed his feelings and submitted to his fate. The first day of his exile from his favourite pursuits was tedious, the second accompanied with incessant headache, and the third brought on symptoms of an approaching fever,—'Sir,' said I, interrupting my tutor, 'my symptoms of fever are also coming on: everybody to their vocation,—you must allow me to take a ride.' Farewell, Mr. Momus, I wait impatiently for your good advice, which I do not feel

much afraid of; because you are neither a grey-beard nor a scholar.

"I remain, your obedient servant,
"HARRY HAIRBRAIN."

ANSWER

"Though I am neither a grey-beard nor a scholar, my young correspondent will not be a jot the better pleased with me when I inform him that I would recommend his being deprived both of his horse and his liberty, and throw him altogether on the resources of his own active mind for his whole and sole amusement, amongst books and grey-beards, where he might either study or look on, as he pleased; at the same time, I quite agree with my correspondent as to the folly of labouring to extract blood from a stone, although this, judging from the spirit of his letter, is very far from a case in point."

It was now dinner-time, so I resolved to dress for Vauxhall after that was over.

"I wonder," said Miss Eliza Higgins, as she assisted at my toilette, "I wonder if the Earl of Fife will be at Vauxhall? What a bore this little green satin gipsy-hat is, and what a magnificent plume of feathers! How divinely they fall over your shoulders! What a heavenly taste Madame le Brun has!"

Miss Eliza Higgins, as it will be perceived, doted on superlatives.

Lord Frederick Bentinck came for me before I was half ready.

"It's quite a bore! you always keep me waiting," said his lordship, when I came downstairs. "I cannot amuse myself in the least in this room, for I dare not open any one of your books, being always afraid of hitting upon something indecent or immoral."

"Come," said I, "we shall be late, if you stand prosing there."

"I am thinking," said Frederick Bentinck, without stirring.

"You can think," I interrupted him, "as we go along." I took hold of his hand, and pulled him towards the door.

"Stop a minute," continued his lordship, "and attend to what I say. I risk a great deal, in going out with a woman like you."

"What do you mean by a woman like me?"

"Why—a woman—a woman—in short, and to speak plainly, of your loose morals!"

"You blockhead!" said I, running downstairs, and having determined in my own mind to be even with him.

The gardens were crowded to excess.

The late Marquess of Londonderry flattered my vanity, and made me prouder than ever my conquest of Lord Worcester could do, by merely looking at me. He certainly looked a great deal more than perhaps his lady might have thought civil. He struck me, particularly on that evening, as one of the most interesting looking men I had ever seen. At first Lord Frederick seemed rather timid, in regard to my loose morals and my striking elegant dress; but, observing that I excited some little admiration and that his sister, as he told me, looked at me as if she had been much surprised and pleased with me, he now grew proud of having me on his arm and pressed forward into the crowd; but I constantly tugged at his arm till I got into the most retired walks.

"What are you afraid of?" said Lord Frederick.

"Why, not of your loose morals: but the fact is, I, who am accustomed to go about with the chosen Apollos of the age, shall get terribly laughed at for being at Vauxhall with such a quiz as you. Not that I doubt your being a very excellent sort of man."

Fred Bentinck laughed with perfect good-humour. He had no vanity, and was so fond of me that I was welcome to laugh at him, and, provided he saw me amused, he was happy.

"I could listen while Harriette talked, though it were for a year together," said Lord Frederick one day to Julia, when I was not present. Indeed he made it a point never to say anything civil to me; but all his actions proved his friendship and regard for me.

At four o'clock in the morning I found Miss Eliza Higgins busy about the new cap which was to kill the Thane.

"Was the Earl of Fife in the gardens?" she inquired, the moment I entered my dressing-room.

The next evening, behold myself and Miss Higgins seated on the sofa before our tea-table, in expectation of Lord Fife. Miss Higgins's new cap would have improved her beauty, had she not diminished its lustre by sitting up all night to finish it; but her fine hair, which was her solitary charm, was suffered to flow over her neck and shoulders in graceful, childish negligence. As for me, the part of second fiddle being altogether new to me, I took the liberty of appearing in my morning dress. Nine was the hour named by Lord Fife, and Miss Higgins had taken out her old-fashioned French watch at least twenty times since she entered the drawing-room, when the house-clock struck that wished-for and lagging hour.

"Is his lordship punctual generally speaking, pray, ma'am?"

"Quite the reverse, I believe," said I, half asleep.

"You have a good heart, I know, ma'am, and we females ought naturally to assist each other in all our little peccadillos," remarked my companion.

"Well?"

"Why, ma'am, I am going to ask your advice, who are better acquainted with his lordship's tastes than I am. I was thinking now, that this little netting-box is pretty and lady-like! Shall I be netting a purse, or will it have a better effect to put on my gloves and be doing nothing?"

Before I could answer this deep question my footman entered the room with a letter, sealed with a

large coronet, and told me that a servant waited below for an answer.

"I will ring when it is ready, James," said I, opening the letter.

"It is an excuse from the Earl of Fife!" said Miss Eliza Higgins, growing whiter than her pearl powder.

Indignation kept me silent after reading the following impertinent letter from the Marquis of Sligo, to whom I had only been presented the day before.

"My Dear Miss Wilson,—Will you be so condescending as to allow me to pass this evening alone with you after Lord Lansdowne's party?

"Sligo."

I had not been so enraged for several years! I rang my bell with such violence that I frightened Miss Eliza Higgins out of the very little wit she possessed.

"Who waits?" said I to James.

"A servant in livery," was the answer.

"Send him up to me."

A well-bred servant, in a cocked hat and dashing livery entered my room, with many bows.

"Here is some mistake," said I, presenting him the unsealed and unfolded letter of Lord Sligo. "This letter could not be meant for me, to whom his lordship was only presented yesterday. Take it back, young man, and say from me, that I request he will be careful how he misdirects his letters in future; an accident which is no doubt caused by his writing after dinner."

The man bowed low, and took away the open communication with him.

"The earl may yet arrive then?" observed Miss Eliza Higgins, recovered herself.

A loud knock at the door now put the matter almost beyond a doubt, and, in another minute, in walked the redoubtable Earl of Fife, in a curious black and tan broad striped satin waistcoat, which was ornamented with a large gold chain. His watch was

very gay, as were his numerous seals, at least twenty in number. "Surely," thought I, as I threw a hasty glance at Miss Eliza Higgins's long, narrow, ill-shaped forehead, brilliant with agitation and pearl-powder, "surely the man must be purblind or it may be his eyes were filled with dust on Sunday, when we met him in the park." However, to my astonishment, his lordship was all rapture, and did nothing but ogle my fair *dame de compagnie*, as though she had been really fair.

As to Miss Eliza Higgins, it had been previously settled and agreed on between us that modesty was to be the order of the day.

"I am not so vain as to fancy myself altogether handsomer than you are, madame," said the humble Miss Eliza to me, "and yet it is clear that the Earl of Fife prefers me; I therefore conceive that I may have appeared to him more timid and modest; therefore it will be better to keep up that character: do not you agree with me, ma'am?"

"Certainly," said I.

Miss Eliza Higgins kept up the farce to excess; scarcely venturing to raise her eyes from the ground, or utter a single syllable, beyond—"yes," or "no, my lord,"—and that in a low whisper. She did indeed once venture to speak pathetically about her grandmamma and her dear grandpapa. Lord Fife declared to me she was an amiable creature, and he presumed to place a ring of some value on her finger, on which occasion Miss Eliza Higgins appeared to be growing rather nervous. He did not take his leave until he had obtained her permission to write to her.

"Miss Eliza Higgins," said I, as soon as we were left alone again, which was not till after midnight, "my good Miss Eliza Higgins, this atmosphere, as you expected, has proved favourable to your wishes. It has done more than your six seasons at Bath. It has, in short, brought a noble earl to your feet. *Je vous en fait mes compliments.* We will now if you please say adieu. Make any use you please of your conquest,

and accept my thanks for having been so truly ridiculous."

Miss Eliza bridled, muttered something about our sex's envy, and declared that she had proposed leaving me herself.

"Agreed then," said I, extending my hand to shake hands. "I promise never to say anything but good of you to Lord Fife; at least not till he is quite tired of you."

Miss Eliza Higgins appeared satisfied and wished me a good night.

"You will forward any letters that may arrive from the Earl of Fife?" said she, returning.

"Certainly."

"Why then, I propose going to my grandmamma's to-morrow."

"*De tout mon cœur*," I replied, and we parted.

CHAPTER XVI

HALF the world was at Elliston's masquerade, given at his place, as he calls the Theatre Royal, Drury-lane ; therefore all I shall say about it is, that I never saw anything of the kind better conducted and I wish he would give another in honour of my arrival the moment I go to London.

During supper, somebody recognised Elliston as he passed through the room ; and he was immediately hailed with three cheers.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Elliston, who was as tipsy as usual, or rather more so perhaps,—"Ladies and gentlemen, I did not expect to have been observed in passing through the crowd. I am very grateful, gentlemen,—very happy, gentlemen,—quite overjoyed, gentlemen,—that any efforts of mine to please and amuse you have been crowned with success——"

At this critical moment, somebody broke some dishes and upset a bottle of champagne.

"Easy ! easy ! quiet—quiet there—pray ! pray !" said Elliston, addressing them by way of parenthesis.

He then continued his speech,—"Yes, gentlemen, you shall have more masquerades ! And what's more, ladies and gentlemen——"

Elliston's lame speech by this time had excited some laughter.

"I never knew him quite so bad as this," said a gentleman on my left.

"As I was saying, gentlemen," Elliston proceeded, "I mean, my kind friends, it has ever been my ambition to give you pleasure, and, gentlemen, masquerades

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are pleasant, merry, spirited things, particularly when the occasion is, like this, to celebrate the birthday of our august—oh! gentlemen and ladies, apropos, I had forgotten,—but I now, though last not least, beg to propose a toast, in which every one of you will join me in your heart of hearts!"

Elliston filled a bumper, and drank—"His Majesty!"

We were all stunned with the loud cheers, three times three repeated, which followed. He then passed round the tables, and stopped to speak to several of his friends, one of whom drank off one bottle of champagne with him, and then called for another.

"No more—no more," said Elliston.

"Why man, one would think you were Cardinal Wolsey."

In about a fortnight after the Opera had closed we all arrived at Brighton.

Leinster gave way to his feelings, on the day I left town, by putting more wine into his glass than usual.

"Only say you like me better than Worcester," said His Grace, "and I shall go to Ireland in some comfort."

"I have forgotten Lord Worcester," said I.

"And you will be glad to see me on my return then?" asked Leinster.

"Certainly," I answered, "and particularly if you will leave off playing the hundred and fourth psalm on the big fiddle. I really am tired of it."

Leinster proposed giving me *Rule Britannia* on my arrival, and promised everything I could wish.

Fred Bentinck rode by the side of my carriage for the first ten miles. He offered to drive me down all the way with his own horses; but on certain conditions, which I declined.

"Well!" said Frederick, in his loud, odd voice, as he took leave of me, at *The Cock* at Sutton, "well, I really do hope you will soon come back. I don't, as you know, make speeches or pretend to be in love

with you. I might have been perhaps; but, the fact is, you are a loose woman rather, and you know I hate anything immoral. However, you may believe me when I say, that I am sorry you are leaving London."

"And what becomes of you?" I asked. "Do you mean to remain all your life in town?"

"Oh! I have too a great deal to do, and my business, you know, is at the Horse Guards."

"God bless you, Frederick Bentinck," said I, as my carriage was driving off. "*Portez vous bien*, although you certainly are enough to make me die of laughter."

"And do," said his lordship, with his half laughing, half cross, but very odd countenance, "pray do conduct yourself with some small degree of propriety at Brighton: and take care of your health. I have, by this day's post, written to my friend Doctor Bankhead about you. I think him clever; and I know he will do what he can to be of service to any favourite of mine."

We had already hired a good house on the Marine Parade. Amy's admirer, Boultby, was one of our first visitors, and then Lords Hertford and Lowther, who were both on a visit at the pavilion. For three whole days Amy sickened us by the tenderness of her flirtation with Boultby, who sat lounging on her sofa as though he had been a first-rate man. At last Amy grew tired of him all at once.

"Get up," said she, rudely pushing her *inamorato* off the sofa.

Boultby refused like a spoiled child, and insisted on another kiss.

"Good heavens, get up then," said Amy, "and don't tumble my ruff. I came down to Brighton for the fresh air, and for three days I have inhaled none of it; and I am not sure that I shall like you. Here put your head on this pillow," added Amy, putting down his head, and rolling a thick table-napkin about it. "So let me fancy you my husband, and in your

night-cap. There," said Amy, holding her head first on one side, then on the other, in order to take a full view of his little, black, ugly face, which examination was not favourable to her lover.

"Get up this instant!" said she, with such fierceness as immediately set him on his legs.

"I told you so," said I, "but you would not believe me."

Boultby hoped his sweet Amy was joking; and he did well to make the most and best he could of the evening: for he was never admitted afterwards.

Lord Robert Manners, whose regiment was stationed in that neighbourhood, was very attentive to me. His lordship is one of the most amiable young men I ever met with. His finely turned head might be copied for that of the Apollo Belvidere, and yet he has no vanity. In short a more manly, honourable, unaffected being does not exist; and much I regret the ill-health under which he has always suffered. His lordship was kind enough to give me my first lesson in riding; often accompanied by the French Duc de Guiche, who was in the Prince Regent's Regiment, and Colonel Palmer. The latter invited me to accompany Lord Robert to the mess-dinner at Lewes. It must more resemble a small select private party than a mess-room, as they seldom mustered more than seven or eight persons together at table.

Bob Manners, as Lord Robert is universally called, was remarkably absent, and spoke but little, yet he possessed a certain degree of quaint, odd humour.

"Those leaders are not bad: who made them?" asked George Brummell, one day of his lordship.

"Why, the breeches-maker," said Bob Manners, speaking very slow.

I accidentally had some conversation with an old infantry officer, belonging to a regiment which had fought some very hard battles, I think it was the 50th, and nick-named the Dirty Half-hundred; but I know their courage was in high repute,

although the officers were not polished men by any means.

Speaking of Lord Robert, my new acquaintance remarked that he was a fine, high-bred looking fellow.

"The Tenth are a very fine looking regiment, take them altogether," continued he, "and they wear very fine laced jackets; but what service have they seen? And yet they hold us poor fellows very cheap, I dare say. The anniversary dinner, by which we are to celebrate the battle where our officers are allowed to have particularly distinguished themselves, happens next Monday: but I suppose your dandies of the Tenth will not condescend to join our humble mess!"

I afterwards repeated this conversation to Lord Robert in the presence of Colonel Palmer.

"Indeed," said his lordship, "the regiment do us great injustice in saying we hold them cheap: on the contrary, while answering for myself, who hold their courage in the highest respect and estimation, I think I may, at the same time, answer for the whole of my regiment."

Colonel Palmer readily joined Lord Robert in his unequivocal expressions of approbation.

"For my part," continued Lord Robert, "I shall not only be happy in such an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with the brave officers of the 50th regiment; but I shall feel hurt and astonished if a single officer of the Tenth, now at Lewes, who may be favoured with an invitation to their dinner, should fail to attend to it. At the same time, I wish you would tell your new acquaintance that while, perhaps, we envy the laurels they have been allowed to gather, they are bound to believe in our readiness to lose our best blood in the service of our country, whenever we are permitted so to prove our courage; but it would be illiberal to blame us for the freshness of our jackets."

Every officer in the Tenth Hussars who happened

to be quartered at Lewes, made it a point, stimulated perhaps by what Lord Robert had said on the subject, to hold himself disengaged for the day, on which they all fully expected to receive an invitation from the officers of the 50th regiment, when, lo!—not one of them was asked!

Lords Hertford and Lowther were our constant visitors at Brighton.

One evening, when His Majesty had a party of ladies and gentlemen at the pavilion, we concluded that Lord Hertford would not be able to leave it. However, at nine his lordship arrived, accompanied by a hamper of claret.

"Much as I respect His Majesty," said Lord Hertford, "I cannot stand the old women at Brighton."

We received letters from Julia and Sophia, declaring they had changed their minds and would not join us.

I saw a great deal of the Duc de Guiche, who used to be called, while in the Tenth Hussars, the Count de Grammont, during my short stay at Brighton. He was very handsome, possessed a quick sense of honour, and ever avoided even the shadow of an obligation: I need not add that he, through strict economy, kept himself at all times out of debt. As an officer he was severe and ill-tempered, but well versed in military business: as a Frenchman he was fonder of flirting than loving; and, with regard to his being a fop, what could a handsome young Frenchman do less?

I refused to see Dr. Bankhead, who had left his card by Lord Frederick Bentinck's desire; because the world said he was a terrible fellow. However, being afterwards afflicted with an attack of inflammation in my chest, I ventured to send for this Herculean Beauty! "He cannot," thought I, "be so very impudent as he has been represented to me by many, and particularly by Mr. Hoare the banker, who declared that maids, wives, and widows were often obliged to pull their bells for protection. Then Lord Castlereagh has too

much good taste to encourage and patronise him as he does, and has done for years, if he were so very bad."

Dr. Bankhead came into my bedroom with the air and freedom of a very old acquaintance.

"What is the matter, my sweet young lady?" said he, "and what can I do for you?"

"I see! I hear!" said he, interrupting me, observing that I spoke with difficulty. "Fever? Yes," feeling my pulse. "Oppression? ah! Cough? hey? Do not speak, my sweet creature. Do not speak! You have been exposing that sweet bosom!" endeavouring to lay his hand upon it, which I resisted with all my strength of hand.

"Nay! nay! nay! stop! stop! stop! hush! hush! You'll increase your fever, my charming young lady; and then what will your friend Fred Bentinck say? quiet! There, don't speak, can you swallow a saline draught? and I'm thinking too of James's powders; but it is absolutely necessary for me to press my hand on that part of your chest or side which is most painful to you."

"Doctor Bankhead, excuse me. This is by no means my first attack of the kind, and I know pretty well how to treat it."

"There! there! then! be quiet my dear young lady. I give you my honour you have already increased your fever. Hush! you will take your draught to-night?"

"Doctor Bankhead, I must——"

"Nay! nay! there! keep yourself quiet," I entreat. "Quietness is everything in these inflammatory fevers, you know, my sweet."

"Doctor Bankhead, I must ring the bell."

"Hush! there! there then! I would not frighten you for the world: and I am apt to frighten ladies, I am indeed! hush! Be quiet! there then! hush! I am indeed, as you may have heard, a most terrible fellow! Be quiet, my sweet lady! Swallow this glass of lemonade! There! now lie very still. In

short, so terrible am I, that I frighten every woman on earth, except Mrs. Bankhead and my Lady Heathcote! hush!"

"Doctor Bankhead! this is an unmanly advantage of——"

"Oh, you naughty creature, to flurry yourself! I would not frighten you for the world! And, since I am so terrifying, take me altogether——"

"Doctor Bankhead, I'll ring the bell," and I tried to reach it.

"You shall have just as much or as little of me as you please. Be still, pray! pray! and this is an offer I never before made to any woman, not even to my dear friend Lady Heathcote."

Dr. Bankhead laid his giant hand on my bosom to demonstrate one of his former feats. My passions were now roused in a peculiar manner, and, catching hold of my bell, I never ceased ringing it till my maid appeared.

I desired her to show Dr. Bankhead out of my house, "And, above all things, do not leave my room without him."

"Good morning, to you, my sweet, comical lady," said Bankhead, and left the house.

In about two months we all grew tired of Brighton, except Fanny, who had never been happier than while galloping over the Downs with the first man she had really loved; perhaps the first who had treated her with the respect and kindness her very excellent and benevolent qualities so well deserved.

I often heard from Fred Bentinck, as well as from His Grace of Leinster. The latter joined me in London towards the end of November. I had only been settled there a few days, when I was surprised by a visit from the young Marquis of Worcester, whose very existence I had almost forgotten.

He expressed his gratitude for being admitted and sat with me for two hours, when our *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by Leinster. He then took his leave, having conversed only on indifferent subjects, without

once touching on the passion Lord Deerhurst and several others had assured me that he entertained for me.

Leinster appeared much annoyed at the reappearance of Worcester and talked of going to Spain.

"I am a great fool," said His Grace, "and travelling may make me wiser."

I shook my head.

"At all events," continued His Grace, "I shall be out of the way of seeing Worcester make love to you. I am no match for him, being of a colder and less romantic turn. Worcester would go to the devil for you, and will make you love him, sooner or later. I cannot contend with him, and therefore I have almost decided to go with my brother, Lord Henry, and young FitzGibbon to the Continent."

"In the meantime," said I, "you really are wrong to tease yourself about Lord Worcester, who never makes love to me: and this morning he talked of nothing but riding and Lord Byron's poetry and music. He did not even offer to shake hands with me, and, when I held out my hand for that purpose, he seemed to shake and tremble, as though it had been something quite unnatural."

"When are you to see him again?"

I assured His Grace that nothing like an appointment had been made; and all Lord Worcester had said on the subject, was a request to be allowed to call sometimes to pay his respects and make his bow.

I went to call on Fanny, after His Grace left me. Lord Alvanly and Amy were with her, and her eternal admirer, Baron Tuille, who told us that Lord Worcester did nothing but inquire of every man he met, whether they had heard anything relative to the departure of Leinster for Spain.

"That's a very fine young man, that Marquis of Worcester," said Amy. "I should like to be introduced to him, only I suppose Harriette, with her usual jealousy, will prevent me."

"On the contrary," said I, "Fanny heard me invite

him to your party after the Opera, the very evening he was presented to me, and he refused to go."

"What a rude way of putting it," said Baron Tuille. "Why not say he was obliged to return to Oxford, and was *en désespoir!*"

"*De tout mon cœur!* Put it how you please," said I.

"I've some news for you," said Fanny. "Sophia has made a new conquest of an elderly gentleman in a curricle, with a coronet on it. He does nothing on earth from morning till night but drive up and down before Julia's door. Julia is quite in a passion about it, and says it looks so very odd."

"Talk of the devil," said Alvanly, as Julia and Sophia entered the room.

"Of fair Hebe rather," Baron Tuille observed.

"Well Miss Sophia, so you've made a new conquest?" said Fanny.

"Yes," answered Sophia: "but it is of a very dowdy, dry-looking man."

"But then his curricle!" I interrupted.

"Yes, to be sure, I should like to drive out in his curricle, of all things."

"It is very odious of the fright to beset my door as he does," Julia said.

"So it is, quite abominable; and, for my part, I hate him, and his curricle too," good-natured Sophia replied.

"But answer me," said Baron Tuille, addressing himself to me, "does the Duke of Leinster go to the continent this year?"

"What is that to you?" I asked.

"Only to satisfy poor Worcester, who is so miserable about him. For my part, I asked him why he did not run away with you by force. But he said, that force was good for nothing; and that while you permitted Leinster to visit you he was perfectly wretched. Suspense was the devil, and he could not think why Leinster bothered at all about going to Spain unless he really had some such intention."

"I believe you are all laughing at me," said I, "and I don't deserve it; for no one can say I am vain: but if I were, no vanity, not even that of the Honourable John William Ward, could construe Lord Worcester's prim conversation into love for me. True, he blushes and trembles, which, in a lad of such mature worldly manners, who has already been so much in society, does look a little like love; but this is the only sign I have witnessed."

"Depend upon it, he is in a desperate, bad way," lisped out Alvanly.

"Were you ever seriously in love, my lord?" I asked.

"Oh, tremendously, last year," answered his lordship; "but then I fancied it was with a woman of fashion. God bless your soul, a fine carriage, on a perch, with scarlet blinds! Could you have imagined she would ever have asked me for money?"

"And what answer did you make?"

"Answer! Why I told her I would have preferred death to even the risk of insulting her; but, since she had destroyed all my illusion, I now was disposed to look upon her in a different light, and pay her accordingly, at the rate of five hundred a year; which was handsome for the time I should continue in her company, which, by the bye, would not have been longer than five minutes! However she refused to have anything more to do with me; and I have now, thank God, entirely recovered my peace of mind."

Worcester was riding near my door as I drove up to it. I stopped to ask him if he liked to join me at Astley's, where I proposed going with the Duke of Leinster. He hesitated, and seemed really annoyed at the idea of Leinster being of the party.

"If you really wish it," said his lordship, reddening.

"Oh, I shall not break my heart," I answered, "only it has struck me, and has struck others, that you liked me, therefore I conceived the proposal might be agreeable."

"I am afraid," said Lord Worcester, "that I shall be thought very intrusive and impertinent; but I am most anxious and desirous to be allowed to say one word to you before you go to Astley's to-night."

"Leinster comes for me at half-past seven," I replied, "so call at seven."

Worcester rode off, all gratitude.

I was surprised to find Leinster sitting at my pianoforte, in my drawing-room, when I got upstairs. "What again at your hundred and fourth psalm?" said I, "after all the promises you have made to become less righteous?"

"I have a favour to ask," said Leinster, and the boy's usual open smile was fled, and he looked infinitely more interesting; because he was paler, and there was an air of sensibility about him, which was seldom the case.

"My dear little Harry," said he, passing his hand across his curly locks, "I am annoyed and bothered to death with Worcester's perseverance. I am going to Spain. I shall stay perhaps several years, and you and I may never meet again. I know you are going to remind me that you never professed any particular love for me and that you never deceived me as to your love of liberty; but I am not asking anything of you as a right: I am only making an appeal to your good-nature, when I entreat you not to receive Worcester's visits till I am gone, which will be, I hope, in less than six weeks. It should be sooner, but that I have many things to arrange relative to my coming of age."

The simplicity and feeling manner in which Leinster delivered his little speech affected me a good deal. No one, not even Fred Bentinck, could ever attach himself to me, without inspiring me with such friendship as results from a grateful heart. I believe all who know me will admit, what I certainly can affirm to be true, namely, that no success of mine ever once led me to fancy a single heart had been mine by right, or *à cause de mon propre mérite*, nor was I

coquette enough to desire general admiration. On the contrary, I thought it hard, and often a bore, that my gratitude should so frequently be taxed, for what gave me no pleasure.

"Do not go, Leinster," said I, kissing his eye, where a tear was glistening; "and, as long as you will stay, I will tell Worcester I must decline receiving his visits."

"When?" said Leinster, with a bright smile which was very pretty.

"His lordship is coming here at seven, and I will then give him his *congé tout de bon*," said I.

Leinster hurried off in high spirits, that he might get back in time to take me to Astley's.

Lord Worcester came to me before I had finished my dinner. He assured me that he now proposed to accompany me, if I still would permit him, to Astley's. "But," said Lord Worcester, after some hesitation, "you are, I am sure you must be, aware that my being present to see the Duke of Leinster, or indeed any man on earth, conduct you home, is very hard upon me."

"I hope not," said I, "and certainly I am not aware of any such thing. You are neither my husband, nor my lover, and you never made any professions of love to me; I hope you felt none; because—" and I hesitated in my turn.

"Because what?" said Lord Worcester, in almost breathless anxiety.

"Because my old friend, the Duke of Leinster, feels much annoyed at your visits, and——"

"And you assured me he was indifferent to you," interrupted Worcester.

"I said I was not in love with him, neither am I; but I cannot bear teasing him; so, to be frank with you, and one must be frank when one is in such a hurry," continued I, laughing, "I have promised to beg of you as a favour not to come here any more."

Lord Worcester's face was scarlet first and then pale as death: he took up his hat, half in indignation,

and then put it down in despair! Had I been more humble than I really am, I could not, with common sense, have doubted the deep impression I had made on Worcester.

"*Ecoutez, mon ami*," said I, holding out my hand to him. "I cannot account for the prejudice which runs high in my favour among you young men of rank. I am inclined rather to attribute it to fashion or some odd accident, than to any peculiar merit on my part: still, flattered as I ought to be, and deeply grateful as I always am, it will yet be paying very dear for the impression which is excited in my favour, if, while my own heart happens to be free as air and my fancy ever laughter-loving, I am to condole all the morning with one fool, and sympathise the blessed long evening with another; neither can I be tender and true to a dozen of you at a time."

"I did not," said Worcester, half indignantly, "I did not know that I was quite a fool; and at all events, I shall not intrude my folly on you if I am."

In vain he tried to pull his hat completely over his eyes. The tears did not glisten there, as they did in Leinster's; but they fell in torrents as he attempted to take leave of me.

"Oh dear me!" said I, as I sighed an inward good-bye to the self-same harlequin-farces, at which I had laughed so heartily many years before, when I accompanied poor Tom Sheridan to Astley's.

"What am I to do, Lord Worcester?" I asked. "Upon my word I would rather suffer anything myself, than cause unhappiness to those that love me. I don't care a bit about myself. Only tell me what I can do for you and Leinster and my sister Fanny? For all who love me in short; for I would make all happy if I could, provided they don't grow too pathetic."

"My dear, dearest Harriette," said Lord Worcester, "no man on earth, feeling as I have done, could have been less pathetic, as you call it, than I have been, for more than six months, that all my prayers, my

hopes, and my wishes, have been for you, and your love and happiness. I have seldom visited you, and never, at least till to-day, done any one thing that could possibly bore or offend you."

I could not but acknowledge this to be true.

"Well then," continued Worcester, "I will throw myself on my knees——"

"No, pray don't," I exclaimed, "I really must go to Astley's, I have not a moment to lose. My word is pledged to Leinster: but I believe that you love me better than he is capable of loving anything, and, since you are good enough to value my friendship, I will not cut you, indeed I will not," and I gave him my hand, which he covered with warm kisses and warmer tears.

"You must go now," I added; "I never break my word, and Leinster will be here directly; but, when he goes to Spain,——"

"Does he go?" interrupted Worcester eagerly.

"Everything is settled," answered I, "and, in less than six weeks Leinster can torment you no more."

Worcester appeared to be overjoyed.

"And, when he is gone, there will be no man you care about left in England?"

"None: except indeed a sort of tenderness, not amounting to anything like passion, for Lord Robert Manners: and then I have a great respect for Lord Frederick's morals, and that is all! So now, my lord, you must set off, and do be merry. You shall hear from me often, and as soon as Leinster is gone you are welcome to try to make me in love with you. If you fail, so much the worse for us both; since I hold everything which is not love, to be mere dull intervals in life."

"I may not call on you then?" asked Worcester.

"I will write, and tell you all about it."

There was now a loud rap at the door.

"I am off," said Worcester. "I cannot bear to sit here a single instant with Leinster. *En grace je te prie, mon ange, ayez pitié de moi, et ne m'oubliez pas.*"

He dropped on one knee to kiss my hand, like a knight of old, and the next instant he was out of sight.

"Was that the Marquis of Worcester who ran out of your home in such a hurry, as I was getting out of my carriage?" asked Leinster, as he entered the room, full dressed, his handsome leg, *en gros*, set off to the best advantage by a fine silk stocking.

"Yes," said I, "but I have desired him not to come again; so pray don't be sentimental. I have had enough of that, this day, to last me my life."

"You are very cold and heartless, which is what, from the expression of your eyes, I had never suspected," remarked Leinster.

"I was in love enough once," I rejoined, "God knows, and what good did it do me?"

After all, I arrived at Astley's just in time for my favourite harlequinade. The house was well attended. I thought that I observed the Marquis of Worcester, slyly glancing at us through the trelliswork of a stage-box; but I was not quite certain. After the piece was finished, I wanted to set Leinster down at his own door; but he declared himself so hungry, that he could not get further than Westminster-bridge without a slice of bread and butter, quite as thick as those his tutor Mr. Smith used to provide him with. This luxury his footman procured, together with a tankard of ale from a pothouse in the immediate vicinity of the theatre.

The next morning Fanny came to take leave of me. Colonel Parker could no longer be absent from his regiment, which was stationed at Portsmouth, therefore they proposed leaving London for that place on the following day.

"Remember me kindly to Lord Worcester, when you see him," said Fanny. "There is something in that young man's countenance I like so much, and his manners are so excessively high bred and gentlemanlike, that I cannot think how you can resist him and treat him so very coldly as you do. As to

Amy, she is going stark mad to be introduced to him."

"With all my heart," said I.

We were now interrupted by the Prince Esterhazy, who entered all over mud, saying, "*Comment ça va?*" without taking off his hat.

"We are discussing the merits of the young Marquis of Worcester, Prince," Fanny observed to him.

"A very fine young man to be sure, certainly," said Esterhazy; "but good mine God, can you not take him one to yourself, instead of all these young fellows running, *toujours*, after you. I could not come near you for a mile the other night, you have so many people round about you."

"That was because you did not take off your hat," I said.

"It is my way," answered the prince; "and I do the same to the queen."

"*Ca se peut*," said I, "*mais, moi, je prétends que vous ne le ferez pas ici: ainsi votre seigneurie aura la bonté, ou, d'oter votre chapeau, ou de vous en aller toute suite.*"

"*Je prendrai la dernière partie*," answered the prince, putting on his great coat and retiring.

"You have been too severe, Harriette," said Fanny, after Prince Esterhazy had taken his departure.

"I would not have been so to a poor man; but really, I have no idea of having one's house mistaken for a cabaret by a nasty coarse German, who, with all his impudence, is, as I am informed, the meanest man alive; besides he always stands with his back to the fire, without paying the least attention when the ladies shiver and shake and vow and declare they are dying with cold!"

Fanny told me, calling another subject, that Julia had not only surmounted her reluctance to Napier, but had become almost as fond of him as she had been of Sir Harry Mildmay; and that was the reason why she refused to join us at Brighton.

I inquired whether he seemed disposed to behave well to Julia and her family.

"Oh, he is horribly stingy," answered Fanny, "and Julia is obliged to affect coldness and refuse him the slightest favour, till he brings her money; otherwise she would get nothing out of him. Yet he seems to be passionately fond of her, and writes sonnets on her beauty, styling her, at forty, although the mother of nine children, 'his beautiful maid.'"

Fanny having her carriage at the door I proposed our calling on Julia.

"I am going to take my leave of her," Fanny replied, and we drove immediately to her residence.

Julia, whose health had been very delicate since her last premature confinement, was gracefully reclining on her *chaise longue*, in a most elegant morning-dress. She expected Napier to dine with her. Sophia was hammering at a little country dance on the pianoforte.

To our inquiry how her curricle-beau went on, she answered, "Oh! he is always driving about this neighbourhood, and I think I have discovered who he is. I believe it to be Lord Berwick; but I am not quite certain. However we are to be introduced to him to-morrow by Lord William Somerset, who has been here this morning, to ask Julia's permission to present a friend. He did not name him, but assured us he was a nobleman of fortune and of great respectability."

We wished her joy and kissed her, and took our leave of Julia, as I afterwards did of Fanny, whose departure made me very melancholy. She was the only sister who cared about me, and we had very seldom, in the course of our lives, been separated from each other. We promised to correspond regularly, and I assured her that when she should be settled at Portsmouth, if she acquainted me that she had a spare bed for me, I would certainly pay her a visit.

"Tell me all about Lord Worcester," said Fanny, "and you may say to him that it is lucky for Colonel

Parker his lordship never turned an eye of love on me."

I came home very dull indeed, and was informed that Leinster, who had been waiting for me more than an hour, had just left the house; but a genteel young Frenchwoman was still in my dressing-room. She came to offer herself in the place of my late *dame de compagnie*, Miss Eliza Higgins.

"*Je vous salue, mademoiselle*," said I, as I entered my little boudoir. "*D'où venez vous?*"

She informed me that she had been living with Lady Caroline Lamb.

I liked her appearance very much: it was modest, quiet, and unaffected. What a contrast to that Miss Eliza Higgins! She did not look as if she was twenty; but she assured me, *sur son honneur*, she was in her twenty-sixth year. I engaged her at once, declined to inquire her character of Lady Caroline, and requested her to come to me the next day.

I never talk much to servants or companions when they come to be hired. If I dislike their faces I tell them I am engaged: if the contrary is the case I desire them to come to me on trial. Wherefore should one ask them, "Can you dress hair?" "Are you quick, good-tempered, honest, handy," &c. &c., when one can as well answer all these questions in their name, oneself, with a single yes?

I passed a restless night. No woman ever felt *le besoin d'aimer* with greater ardour than I. What could I not have been, what could I not have undertaken for the friend, the companion, the husband of my choice? *En attendant*, methought, Lord Worcester knew how to love: that was something; but then, where was the power of thought, the magic of the mind, which alone could ensure my respect and veneration?

The next morning my new French maid, who had just arrived, brought me not a letter but a volume, from Lord Worcester: it was not a bad letter. No letter is uninteresting which is written naturally and feelingly.

"Does this young man love me?" I asked of Luttrell, who called on me before I had finished my breakfast, as I presented to him the young marquis's effusion.

"With all his soul, his heart, and his strength," answered Luttrell.

Leinster was my next visitor, and then Lord Robert Manners, dressed in a red waistcoat, corduroy breeches, worsted stockings, and thick shoes, which, I think, had nails in them; yet, in spite of all this, he looked very handsome. The Duke of Wellington came next.

"Why the devil did not your servant tell me that all these people were here?" whispered the merely mortal hero, as he bolted downstairs, and ran foul of Lord William Russell in the passage.

"When do you mean to come and pass a month at Lewes?" asked Lord Robert Manners.

"Your application comes too late, Master Bob, said George Brummell, who had just entered the room. "Harriette is about to bestow her fair hand on the young Marquis of Worcester. But your fingers are covered with ink, man! How happened that?" continued the beau, eyeing his lordship's hands with a look of undisguised horror.

"Franking a letter for some fool or another: such a nuisance!" answered Bob Manners, looking at his fingers pettishly.

These men talked a great deal more nonsense, only I have forgotten it. After they were gone, I made my young Frenchwoman bring her work into my dressing-room for an hour.

"How did you like Lady Caroline Lamb?" I asked her, and, when she had answered all my questions, I sat down to scribble the following letter to my sister Fanny at Portsmouth.

"My dearest Fanny,—The frank Lord William has left for you must not be lost, although I really have as yet nothing new or lively to communicate. Your favourite, Lord Worcester, has not been admitted

since you were in town, notwithstanding he writes me such letters! but I will enclose one of them to save trouble, for one grows tired of all this nonsense. Poor Leinster is infinitely more attentive and amiable, since this powerful rival has put him upon his mettle. For my part, since the hope of mutual mind is over, I try and make the best of this life, by laughing at it and all its cares.

"My new French maid has just been telling me a great deal about her late mistress, Lady Caroline Lamb. Her ladyship's only son is, I understand, in a very bad state of health. Lady Caroline has therefore hired a stout young doctor to attend on him: and the servants at Melbourne House have the impudence to call him Bergami! He does not dine or breakfast with Lady Caroline or her husband, who, you know, is Fred Lamb's brother, the Honourable William Lamb; but he is served in his own room, and her ladyship pays great attention to the nature and quality of his repasts. The poor child, being subject to violent attacks in the night, Lady Caroline is often to be found after midnight in the doctor's bedchamber, consulting him about her son. I do not mean you to understand this ironically, as the young Frenchwoman says herself there very likely is nothing in it, although the servants tell a story about a little silk stocking, very like her ladyship's, having been found one morning quite at the bottom of the Doctor's bed. This doctor, as Thérèse tells me, is a coarse, stupid-looking, ugly fellow; but then Lady Caroline declares to her, *que monsieur le docteur a du fond!*

"She is always trying to persuade her servants that sleep is unnecessary, being *une affaire d'habitude seulement.* She often called up Thérèse in the middle of the night, and made her listen while she touched the organ in a very masterly style.

"Her ladyship's poetry, says Thérèse, is equally good, in French, in English, or in Italian; and I have seen some excellent specimens of her talents for caricatures. She sometimes hires a servant, and

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sends him off the next day for the most absurd reasons: such as, "Thomas! you look as if you required a dose of salts; and altogether you do not suit me," &c. She is the meanest woman on earth, and the greatest tyrant generally speaking, *quoiqu'elle a ses moments de bonté;* but as to her husband, he is at all times proud, severe, and altogether disagreeable.

"Lady Caroline ate and drank enough for a porter, and, when the doctor forbade wine, she was in the habit of running into her dressing-room to *dédommager* herself, with a glass or two of *eau de vie vieille, de cognac!* One day, Thérèse, whose bed-chamber adjoined that of William Lamb, overheard the following conversation between them.

"Lady C. 'I must and will come into your room. I am your lawful wife. Why am I to sleep alone?'

"William. 'I'll be hang'd if you come into my room, Caroline; so you may as well go quietly into your own.'

"Lady Caroline persevered.

"'Get along you little drunken——," said William Lamb.

"The gentle Caroline wept at this outrage.

"'*Mais où est, donc, ce petit coquin de docteur?*' said William, in a conciliatory tone.

"'Ah! *il a du fond, ce docteur là,*' answered Caroline, with a sigh.

"Mind I don't give you all this nonsense for truth; I merely repeat the stories of my young Frenchwoman: and Lady Caroline has assured her housekeeper that Thérèse abhors a lie. Take her ladyship altogether, this comical woman must be excellent company. I only wish I had the honour of being of her acquaintance. Not that I think much of her first novel, *Glenarvon;* and she is really not quite mad enough to excuse her writing in her husband's lifetime, while under his roof, the history of her love and intrigue with Lord Byron! The letters are really his lordship's, for he told me so himself. I once asked

Luttrell, who was a particular acquaintance of William Lamb, why that gentleman permitted his wife to publish such a work.

"'I have already put the very same question to William, myself,' answered Luttrell, 'and this was his reply: "I give you my word and honour, Luttrell, that I never heard one single word about *Glenarvon* until Caroline put her book into my own hands herself on the day it was published."'

"Lady Caroline, I am told, always speaks of her husband with much respect, and describes her anxiety about his maiden speech in the House of Commons, to witness which she had in the disguise of a boy contrived to pass into the gallery. But enough of her ladyship, of whose nonsense the world is tired. I admire her talents, and wish she would make a better use of them.

"Poor Alvanly's carriage-horses have, I fancy, been taken in execution. However, he said last night at Amy's, that he had a carriage at the ladies' service only he had got no horses; so we set him down.

"'I cannot find any knocker, my lord,' said the footman, at our carriage-door, after fumbling about for some time.

"'Knock with your stick,' said Alvanly, and then continued his conversation to us, 'my d—n duns made such a noise every morning, I could not get a moment's rest, till I ordered the knocker to be taken off my street-door.'

"Lord Worcester has been making up to Julia, who has promised to be his friend with me, I mean to a certain extent; but, when he teases her to tell him whether he has any chance of ever having me under his protection, she declares she knows nothing about me or my plans, except that I am always the most determined, obstinate woman in Europe. Brummell they say is entirely ruined. In short, everybody is astonished, and puzzled to guess how he has gone on so long! God bless you, my dearest Fanny. I meant only to write three lines, and here is a volume

for you. Remember me kindly to Colonel Parker, and believe me ever,

"Your affectionate sister,

"HARRIETTE.

"P.S.—Do pray, keep yourself warm: particularly your chest. Dr. Bain says your little cough is chiefly nervous; but I am anxious to hear how the air of Portsmouth agrees with you; therefore write soon all about it."

CHAPTER XVII

Viscount Berwick was a nervous, selfish, odd man, and afraid to drive his own horses. Lord William Somerset was an excellent whip; but he had no horses to whip. Lord Berwick, like Lord Barrymore, wanted a tiger; while Somerset required a man whose curricle he could drive and whose money he could borrow. The bargain was struck; and Tiger-Somerset had driven Lord Berwick some years, when his lordship, after having, for more than a fortnight, been looking at my sister Sophia at her window, one day addressed the tiger as follows:

"I have at last found a woman I should like to marry, Somerset, and you know I have been more than twenty years upon the look-out."

"Who is she?" some Somerset, in some alarm.

Berwick told him all he knew and all he had seen of Sophia.

"I think I know whom you mean," said Tiger, "since you mention the house; because it belongs to Miss Storer, Lord Carysfort's niece, who has, I know, a fine young girl staying with her, whom Lord Deerhurst seduced."

"Seduced already! you do not say so?"

"Most true, my lord," said Tiger-Somerset; "besides, I've often seen her, when Deerhurst used to take her out last year. She has no eyebrows, and——"

"I don't care for that, I love the girl, and will have her," was his lordship's knock-down argument; and Lord William Somerset, having obtained permission

from Julia, presented Lord Berwick to Sophia on the following morning.

Sophia would not hear of such a very nasty, poking, old, dry man, on his first visit; but the second day she was induced to drive out in his barouche. On the third she declared his lordship's equipage the easiest she ever rode in; but then, he wore such a large hat! In short, she could not endure him even to shake hands with her. I never knew Sophia evince so much decided character since she was born, as in her dislike of Lord Berwick; though she condescended to enter his barouche and dine with him, accompanied by Julia or myself, yet no persuasion of Lord Berwick, no prayers that his lordship had wit to make, could prevail on her to trust herself for an instant in his society. Things went on this way for several weeks, Berwick made very pleasant parties to Richmond, and did everything with princely magnificence. Worcester's good uncle, Lord Berwick's tiger, wanted Worcester to join their parties, and Worcester would not go anywhere without me.

My time being so gaily taken up, I had to reproach myself with neglect towards my sister Fanny. "Give me my writing-desk," said I to my maid, Thérèse, at past four in the morning, "for I have made a vow not to sleep till I have fully answered Fanny's last two letters," which I did as follows:

"My dearest Sister,—It is past four o'clock in the morning, and yet my conscience still keeps me awake till I have answered your two letters. Believe me, my neglect does not in the least proceed from want of affection. One is sometimes teased into going out, till one acquires a sort of habit of society, which it becomes difficult to throw off. Sophia's new lover, Lord Berwick, did not let me enjoy a single day in quiet; and not at all out of regard or respect for my superior merit; but merely because Sophia refuses to stir without me.

"The Duke of Leinster's departure for Spain is at

last absolutely fixed for next Monday. Lord Worcester heard this at White's club-house, and was so overjoyed that everybody in the room laughed at him. For my part I can scarcely understand why I feel so melancholy at the thought of losing a young man whom I really never cared about; but I am always thus, at parting with anybody to whose face I have become accustomed. Not only am I sorry to lose the Duke of Leinster, but I feel angry and disgusted with Worcester, for desiring his departure.

"We were all at the play last night: that is to say Julia, Sophia, Lord W. Somerset, Lord Berwick and Lord Worcester, with your humble servant, in two private boxes adjoining each other. Lord Berwick teases Julia and me from morning till night. He wants us to persuade Sophia to receive a settlement from him of five hundred a year, and to place herself under his protection. We do not like to advise at all on such subjects; and whenever he ventures to touch on them to Sophia herself, she begins to sob and cry as if she were threatened with sudden death! I asked her last night why she accepted so many magnificent presents from his lordship, and suffered him to put himself to such immense expense, if she disliked him so violently.

"'Oh, I never said I disliked his carriages, or his jewels, or his nice dinners,' answered Sophia.

"Lord Worcester is quite as indefatigable as Lord Berwick, in his endeavours to persuade me to accompany him to Brighton, his lordship having just entered the Tenth Hussars. Lord Berwick proposes taking a fine house at Brighton for Sophia and Julia, and sending down his plate, man-cook, &c., but Sophia says he may hire his fine house if he likes, but for her part she will live with Julia in a smaller one, though at the same time, she shall have no sort of objection to become one at his dinner-parties, if Worcester and myself are present. Thus Sophia has set Lord Berwick to work to plead Worcester's cause for him. I got into a passion one day last week, and declared

I would not be teased out of my liberty, which I valued more than my life.

"In the evening, Lord Worcester found me seriously ill, with an oppression on my chest, to which I am become rather subject. I could not have imagined that any young man in any class of life could have made such a good nurse! He ran up and down from the kitchen to the drawing-room twenty times, and poured out my water gruel and my tea, as though this had been his natural vocation. Seriously, I was very grateful. Nothing attaches a woman, in my weak, nervous state of health, like these kind of attentions; and I must do justice to the excellent taste of Worcester in never intruding his passion on me.

"'Let Harriette please herself, or rather, Harriette must do as God pleases about loving me, but my affection for her cannot change. I live in her happiness, whoever may contribute to it. I may be miserable; but I shall never cease to love her:' and then he winds up his letters thus: 'may my God forsake me, if ever I love another woman! and may I be eternally wretched, if ever, in word or deed, I am unfaithful to you, to the latest hour of my life!'

"I, who am, as you know, anything but cold-hearted, of course feel touched by Lord Worcester's apparent devotion to me; but I am not a bit touched with love. The tenderness of a sister is all I feel. Good heavens! what can he expect from one who has loved as I have loved, and gone through what I have gone through!

"I don't think I shall go to Brighton or to Worcester. I am tired of flattery: it makes me sick; for I know that I am nothing particular, or Ponsonby would have died rather than have left me to such despair as he did. I am now beginning to dislike society and, when I cannot enjoy that of very clever, intelligent people, I could rather read Shakespeare's plays, *Gil Blas* or *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

"Poor Leinster! that man is only about three degrees and a half above a good-tempered Newfound-

land dog, and yet I am sorry he is leaving me, perhaps for ever.

"I often think what I might have been, and then I wonder much that I am what I am! I love home, I am somewhat domestic, I love, dearly love my parents, and wish to improve the little talents God has given me. I am very affectionate, and naturally honourable; because I abhor a lie! and yet behold me!—Harriette Wilson.

"If you were to die, who would stand my friend when the world tramples on me? I put this question to Worcester the other day, after I had been frightening myself about your health; and Worcester shed a great many tears, as though the idea of my ever being left friendless affected him deeply. Yet, no doubt, the time will come, and you and I, if we live, shall witness it, when Worcester, having forgotten my very existence, will, while the lady of his heart or his wife is hanging on his arm, pass me by as a perfect stranger! This too, I said to Worcester, and, unasked, almost unattended to by me, he solemnly pledged himself to have no wife on earth or in heaven but myself, and wrote down the oath.

"Enough of the sublime and the pathetic: and now a word or two about yourself; but, let me remind you first, that it is at your own particular request I have been such an egotist.

"I am glad to hear that Parker looks forward with so much delight to the idea of becoming a father. It is a strong proof of a good heart, generally speaking. With regard to the repugnance you say you feel, in availing yourself of the invitations from ladies, who believe you to be Parker's wife, I certainly in your place would never seek them; neither are you bound to say anything of yourself which can prejudice society against you. You tell me that some of the ladies in your neighbourhood will take no excuses. Well then visit them, whenever you are in the humour, and if they have good taste they will be delighted with your society.

"I cannot express to you how glad I was to learn, from your last letter, that you are more comfortable and happy than you have ever been in your life before. Did you get a letter from our dear mother yesterday? Napier is at Melton Mowbray. To-morrow we all dine with Lord Berwick again, at his house in Grosvenor Square.

"I meet Worcester at everybody's house but my own, where, out of respect for Leinster, I seldom admit him; since, by the powers and upon his honour, it bothers him to death.

"Amy has, at this present writing, a great deal of work on her hands, owing to our general change or projected change of administration. Worcester, Berwick, Parker and Napier; all to win and seduce away at once!

"Parker she has already made an attempt on: this you with all your good-natured charity have confessed: and the other night at the play, we observed her sitting in a private box on the opposite side of the house with Baron Tuille. Her glass was pointedly turned towards Worcester all the evening. After the play, while we were waiting for our carriage, Amy, with an affection of childish wildness, made loud remarks on the elegance of Worcester's person, as we passed her. Our party stood on the opposite side of the room from that where the Baron and Amy were waiting. Worcester however was obliged to pass close to them, to inquire for Lord Berwick's servants, and Tuille at the express desire of Amy probably, tapped him on the arm as he was hurrying along, and requested to have the pleasure of introducing Mrs. Sydenham to him. Worcester in much confusion bowed low, very low; but passed on immediately afterwards without uttering a single syllable.

"What a bore for Amy! and yet it serves her right!

"'I could not possibly avoid being presented to your sister,' said Lord Worcester on his return; and he spoke with such agitation and confusion that it was impossible to help laughing at him.

"'You were not very attentive to her, as I think I could observe,' Julia remarked.

"I would not have spoken a single word to her for the world, and I only wish, as a gentleman, it had been possible to have avoided bowing. Mrs. Sydenham has, by her perseverance, made herself so very odious to me,' was Worcester's reply.

"Lord Berwick laughed heartily at his extreme delicacy; so did Lord William; but Worcester is steady as a rock to me and my interests. Not even ridicule, that sharpest weapon which malice can turn against the feelings and prejudices of youth, ever changes him one jot, even when it wounds him most severely.

"'Any unimpassioned, unprejudiced observer of Harriette's mind and character,' says Worcester, 'must agree with me, that it is much undervalued by that part of the world to whom her eccentricities and careless observance of many established forms only are known; but Harriette's goodness and singleness of heart approximate her nearer to my idea of perfection, than any human being I have yet met with, and her face and person, to me, convey all I can imagine most desirable.'

"I repeat this to you, my dear Fanny, merely to show the force and power of ardent passion in youth. *Dieu! comme cela nous embellit!*

"O, *la belle passion! que l'amour!* not that I have known much good resulting from it. I might almost say, with Candide, '*Helas! je l'ai connu, cet amour, ce souverain des cœurs! cette âme de notre âme! cependant, il ne m'a jamais valu qu'un baiser, et vingt coups de pied! puisse il vous être plus propice!*'

"You shall hear what becomes of me next Tuesday, after Leinster will have left London. In the meantime, I need not say how truly I am yours, &c.

"HARRIETTE."

Fanny's answer:—

"MY DEAR HARRIETTE,—It is very lucky you wrote when you did, because I was getting in such a

very great passion! Lord Worcester, from what you tell me, and from all I have seen, is, without any exception, the most interesting young man I ever knew; and I am surprised you do not think him handsome. Do remember me to him very tenderly: as to your stupid Duke of Leinster he never deserved you.

"I am just returned from the Isle of Wight. The weather was rather rough, and, at best, I cannot say I like sailing half as well as riding; nevertheless, we have been very merry; Parker is so kind and affectionate, and the officers of his regiment are so very attentive and polite to me.

"Whom do you think I met at Cowes? No less a personage than your friend and kind creditor Mr. Smith of Oxford-street. I recognised him by his voice, as he was addressing a little fat friend of his. We were sitting on a bench near enough to hear every word they said.

"'Mr. Smith,' said the little fat man, holding out his hand, 'mercy on me! Smith! Is it really you? What, in the name of wonder can have brought you to Cowes?'

"'Vy, lord,' answered Smith, 'vat but the vinds and the vaves could bring me here, hey? I've been down to Margate since I seed you. Bless your life, I'm on a tower.'

"'What might that be pray?'

"'Vy, a tower, man. Don't you know vat a tower is?'

"'Not I, indeed!'

"'Vy, you stupid! a tower is a kind of a circular journey, gallivanting from this here place to that are place, for a month or two merely, to pleasure it like.'

"'And pray what might you call pleasure, Mr. Smith?'

"'Pleasure?' answered Smith, 'vy I calls pleasure gitting up at six in a morning, and taking a dip into the sea, and then a hearty good breakfast of hot rolls and butter, and coffee and eggs.'

"'And what then?' said the little fat man.

"'Vat then? you ere a bachelor too, and ask vat then? And all these ere beautiful nice, plump, dear lasses about? Bless their dear souls! I'm going to take one on 'em to the play to night.'

"'Oh! you rogue and a half,' said the little fat man, giving Smith a punch on the breast.

"Apropos! talking of vulgarity, I have had a proposal of marriage since I saw you, from Mr. Blore the stone-mason, who keeps a shop in Piccadilly. Parker says it is all my fault, for being so very humble and civil to everybody; but, you must recollect, this man was our near neighbour when we were all children together, and I cannot think I had any right to refuse answering his first civil inquiry after my health, by which he no doubt thought as a man of good property and better expectations, he did me honour. Since then, he has often joined me in my little rural walks early in the morning. When first his conversation began to wax tender I scarcely believed my ears. However, those soft speeches were speedily succeeded by a proposal of marriage! You know my foolish way of laughing at everything of this kind, which was what encouraged him to argue the point, after I had begged to decline his polite offer. 'Look ye here, my dear lady,' said he, 'these here officers cut a splash! And it's all very fine being called Mrs. Parker, and the like a that; but then it's nothing compared to a rale husband. Now, I means onorable, remember that.' I was interrupting him. 'Come, I don't ax you, my dear, to make up your mind this morning. Marriage is a serious kind of a thing, and I wants no woman for to marry me till she has determined to make an industrious, good wife. Not as I should have any objection to your taking a bit of pleasure of a Sunday, and wearing the best of everything; but, at the same time, we must stick to the main chance for a few years longer, if ever we wishes for to keep our willa,

and be raley genteel and respectable. Not but what I've got now as good a shay an oss as any man need to wish for, and an ouse over my head, full of handsome furniture, and plenty of statters (statues), still I looks forwards to better things.'

"Though it is morally and physically impossible for a woman, be she what or whom she may, to attach herself to anything so low and vulgar as this poor Mr. Blore, after she has acquired the taste, by the habit of good society, still I certainly have a right to feel obliged to any honest man who yet considers me worthy to become his partner for life; and I could not have said anything cross or harsh to him for the world. You have no idea what difficulty I found in making him believe that I would not marry him.

"'There. my dear,' said he, after I had assured him, over and over again, that I must really decline his offer. 'There my dear! I will leave you now. I don't want you to decide all at once; but, remember, you must not let what I a been a-saying about our minding the main chance, frighten you; because you'll find me a very reasonable, good-natured fellow: and, as for going to the play, if you are fond of that, I can get orders for the pit, whenever I like.'

"I presume you have now had quite enough of my intended, and I know you will want to hear something of my health, about which you so kindly interest yourself. I was alarmed about ten days ago by the rupture of a small blood-vessel, which caused an expectoration of blood for two days. Being unwilling you or my dear mother should be at all alarmed about me, I would not mention this, till all these bad symptoms were removed completely, which is now the case. My physician tells me such small vessels are of little consequence; and, by avoiding over-fatigue and taking care of myself, he has no doubt I shall get perfectly well. Indeed there is now nothing at all the matter with me, unless I attempt to walk fast; and then I

feel a something like stagnation and fulness about my heart, and my lips turn blueish. However, I both eat and sleep well, and I am told that when patients ask Dr. Baillie to prescribe for them for any pain or ache, while enjoying these two advantages, the doctor loses patience and refuses to listen to them: *et tant mieux!* I do not want to die, and go we know not whither, and lose sight of the bright sun for ever. I am not even ambitious of a show-death, to have my fortitude, or my sweet smile, or my calm courage, or my last prayers extolled. You know I am not in the least romantic; but I am attached to life for my dear children's sake, and, in a word, though it may be cowardly, yet I hope and pray that God will spare my life many years longer: but, if he has willed it otherwise, I will try not to murmur at his decree: and I tell you frankly that my sins do not sit at all heavy on my conscience; because I never doubt the goodness of God. This is all very grave; but I am so seldom grave that you will forgive me.

"I shall write to you, my dear sister, again very soon; but I will conclude now; because I am a little too serious: so believe me ever,

"Most truly and affectionately yours,

"FANNY PARKER."

When Lord Worcester had ascertained that Leinster was really safe on his journey to the continent, half wild with joy he went and consulted Julia as to what she really believed was his chance of inducing me to go to Brighton. I had obtained his promise not to call on me, nor write to me, for at least three days after Leinster's departure.

"We shall only quarrel," said I to his lordship, "if you come to me rejoicing, as I know you will, at a circumstance which no doubt will affect me *pour le moment.*"

I passed a melancholy evening after Leinster had taken leave of me. He was to sail from Portsmouth. Should he be detained by foul winds, even for a

single hour, he promised to write to me. The first day I refused to admit any visitor, and on the second after his departure I received a letter from him, to acquaint me that the unfavourable state of the weather might possibly detain him a week or more at Portsmouth. My resolution was taken in an instant: which wise resolution may be learned from the following letter addressed to my sister.

"My Dearest Fanny,—Leinster is at Portsmouth, waiting for a fair wind to convey him to Spain. I am too melancholy to keep my promise of receiving Worcester's visits; and, besides, being desirous of shaking hands once more with the poor duke, you will believe me really and in truth very anxious to hear and see how you are, after the accident you have so long concealed from us. Therefore expect me almost as soon as my letter; and do pray be glad to see me.

"I propose leaving London at eight o'clock tomorrow morning, till then believe me,

"Most truly yours,

"Harriette."

After despatching this, and a letter full of excuses to Lord Worcester, I began to assist my maid Thérèse to prepare for my journey to Portsmouth on the following morning. We arrived in time for dinner. Fanny was looking better than usual. Colonel Parker was absent, and she was kind enough to invite the Duke of Leinster to dine with us. His Grace was very glad to see me, in his dry way; but it was impossible to avoid making such comparisons between my two young lovers as were most favourable to Worcester.

The marquis wrote me immensely long letters every day; and though I expected Sunday would have been a day of rest, I was presented with a large packet which Worcester had sent by the stage coach. He trembled lest I should be induced to accompany

Leinster to Spain, and described the anguish and misery he had experienced, in learning from my servant that I had left London : for it was only on his return from my house, that he had received my letter acquainting him with my departure.

Fanny lived in a delightful cottage, surrounded with a large garden. There were two very pleasant women staying with her on a visit ; it made me truly happy to see her so comfortable and in such good spirits.

Fanny did not like Leinster, and I felt rather cooled and disgusted, when she forced on my attention his extreme selfishness in leaving England without inquiring at all about the state of my finances. Then, poor Worcester was, or seemed to be, so very unhappy about me ; and I saw no chance of these boobies, Leinster, his brother, and FitzGibbon, sailing, as the wind had not shifted the least in the world during the ten days I passed at Portsmouth.

Leinster, much as he professed to esteem, respect and love me, went out in a sailing-boat every morning, instead of walking about with me. My pride took the alarm and, one fine morning, having previously arranged everything for my return to town, and taken leave of my sister, I coolly wished him *un bon voyage* and, to his utter astonishment, jumped into the carriage which was to convey me to London.

I found a great many cards and letters on my table in town : a very kind one from Lord Robert Manners, another from Lord Frederick Bentinck, and, what was better still, another blank cover, directed to me, containing two bank-notes for one hundred pounds each !

Julia called on me the morning after my arrival.

" Do go to Brighton," said she. " You will never find anybody to like you as I am sure Lord Worcester does. I really would not advise you, but that I think he deserves you."

"I will consider about it," said I, "in the meantime pray tell me some news. How does Lord Berwick go on?"

Julia told me that he was quite as much in love with Sophia as ever.

"And Sophia?"

"Oh, Sophia hates his lordship, if possible, more than ever, and declares she will not go to Brighton unless you decide to accompany Worcester there."

We were now interrupted by a visit from Lord Worcester. I will not attempt to describe his rapture, or how violently he was agitated at meeting with me. My readers, besides accusing me of vanity, would not believe such exaggerated feeling as he evinced, to be in human nature. In short, since there is nothing so uninteresting as descriptions of love-scenes, be it known that I was pressed by Julia, entreated by Worcester, and inclined by gratitude, being moreover in a state of health which required nursing; therefore, without being in love, I agreed to place myself under his protection. It was a grievous sin, and every one of this kind counts no doubt; and, indeed, I almost fear the recording angel, as he mounted up to heaven with mine, so far from dropping a tear on it to blot it out for ever, doubled this one, and so cried quits with my uncle Toby.

There certainly was much aggravation of sin in my projected intercourse with the Marquis of Worcester. Many women, very hard pressed *par la belle nature*, intrigue, because they see no prospect, nor hopes, of getting husbands; but I, who might, as everybody told me and were incessantly reminding me, have, at this period, smuggled myself into the Beaufort family, by merely declaring to Lord Worcester, with my finger pointed towards the North—"that way leads to Harriette Wilson's room"; yet so perverse was my conscience, so hardened by what Fred Bentinck calls my perseverance in loose morality,

that I scorned the idea of taking su ch an advantage of the passion I had inspired in, what I believed to be, a generous breast, as might hereafter cause unhappiness to himself, while it would embitter the peace of his parents.

CHAPTER XVIII

Viscount Berwick, in a magnificent equipage drawn by four milk white horses, or four of raven black, I forget which, led the way towards Brighton, followed by the more humble vehicles containing his cook, his plate, his frying-pans, and other utensils. Soon afterwards Julia and Sophia started in a neat little chariot drawn by two scraggy black horses, *parceque Mademoiselle Sophie voulait faire paraître les beaux restes de sa vertu chancelante.* Lord Worcester I sent down alone, that he might hire a house and have everything in readiness.

"But, if I once join my regiment I shall not be allowed to return," Worcester observed.

"No matter," said I, "my maid and myself can find our way to Brighton with perfect safety."

"I can ride ten or fifteen miles to meet you," Worcester said, and having made me promise again and again that he might expect me at a certain hour on a certain day, he took his leave and also set off for Brighton.

"I have a great mind not to go," said I to myself after Worcester had left me. However, my word was passed and my maid had already begun to pack my trunks.

"Pray do not go," said my wild, young tormentor, Augustus Berkeley, who came upstairs without permission, just as we were ready to start. "I have so sworn to Worcester that he would not be successful."

I laughed.

"What do you laugh at, you tiresome creature?" asked Augustus.

"At your vanity, in supposing that none but the most immaculate could refuse you."

"Why, I am a better-looking fellow than Worcester, at all events," said Augustus.

"True," I replied, "but then you do not like me half as well."

"All nonsense, nobody loves you better than I do, only I have the misfortune not to be a lord."

"I have been at least as civil to you, as I ever was to the Marquis of Sligo, the Prince Esterhazy, and many others."

"Well," said Augustus, "however that may be, I will never forgive you for going to Worcester."

"It is a very hard case," I observed: "but I cannot help it."

Augustus left me sulkily, and we were soon on our way to Brighton. I was just growing tired of my journey and of the society of my maid, who, probably, was as much bored with mine, since she had fallen fast asleep, when I observed the figure of an officer or private wearing some uniform, which looked at a distance like that of the Tenth Hussars, galloping towards us. As it approached it grew a little more like the young marquis, and yet, somehow or other, I could not reconcile it to my mind that he should wear regimentals. I had forgotten that circumstance and felt disappointed. A gentleman always looks so much better in plain clothes. I was soon put out of suspense by his kissing his hand to me.

Love is sharp-sighted. In another minute or two the Marquis of Worcester was blushing and bowing by the side of my carriage. He told me that he had got a house for me in Rock Gardens, where he had left his footman, Mr. Will Haught, to get all square, that being the man's favourite expression. The said Mr. Will Haught was a stiff, grave, steady person of about forty. He always wore the Beaufort livery, which was as stiff as himself, and used to take his hat off and sit in the hall on a Sunday, with a clean pocket-handkerchief tied about his head, reading the Bible,

offering thus to the reflecting mind these two excellent maxims: "Respect God, but do not catch cold." I enter into all these particulars, by way of recommending him to Alderman Goodbehere, I think it was, who promulgated similar sentiments about a cold church, though I have from a sense of propriety omitted his first expletive epithet.

This Mr. Will was commander-in-chief of Worcester's servants. He had indeed been bred in the family and was, I believe, the Duchess of Beaufort's footman before his lordship was born, and though he wore a livery he had since been raised to the rank of under butler by the Duke of Beaufort. Why he was dismissed from that most honourable post, to follow the fortunes of his noble young master, I cannot tell, unless indeed, Her Grace, touched and deeply impressed by the pious and respectful manner in which Will Haught was in the habit of binding up his temples on a Sunday with his clean pocket-handker chief, while reading the Bible, had employed him as a spy, to watch over the morals of her hopeful first-born. Be that as it may, we found Will quite as busy in settling everything for my comfort, as though I had been the duchess's chosen daughter-in-law, for whom he was making all square, upon the square, which means, I believe, in the way of honesty.

The coachman, Mr. Boniface, had also had the honour of driving the duchess in auld lang syne. We found him by no means so officiously polite and attentive as Mr. Will Haught: on the contrary, he was fast asleep, with his nice little *vieille cour* cotton wig all awry. We found a groom in the Beaufort livery at the door, waiting for his lordship's horse, which he handed over by the bridle to the under-groom, and the under-groom sent a soldier with it to the stable.

"What a bore it will be to have all these lazy porter-drinking men in one's house," thought I, with very unmarchioness-like humility: but then I never set up for anything at all like a woman of rank.

Will Haught introduced my maid to a female servant, whom he had himself hired, and whom he desired to show her mistress's apartments to my woman. As to Lord Worcester, he was so excessively overjoyed at finding all his fears and dread of losing me at an end, that the moment he could contrive to get rid of Will Haught, he pressed my hand, first to his trembling lips and next to his heart, and then he burst into tears, which he however, from very shame, dried up as soon as he possibly could, and with the genuine feelings of affection and hospitality, he asked me if, after the fatigue of my little journey, I should prefer passing the night alone.

"And where are you to sleep?" said I.

His lordship informed me that he had a good bed in his dressing-room.

I then told him that, if he would permit me to pass this night alone, he would see me in excellent temper and spirits to-morrow. "At present everything is strange here, therefore, if I am a little melancholy, you must not, my dear Worcester, fancy it proceeds from want of regard for you."

It was impossible not to be reconciled to Worcester, while he thus acceded to all my wishes, reasonable or unreasonable. A good lesson this, for many a fool who thinks to win a woman's heart by crossing all her desires.

An excellent dinner was well served, and, while we partook of it, his lordship informed me that Lord Berwick, whom he always called Tweed, wished to have dined with us accompanied by Sophia and Julia; but he had not ventured to invite them without first ascertaining whether it would be agreeable to me.

Lord Worcester's fine person looked remarkably well in the elegant evening uniform of the Tenth, and I was so touched and won, by being allowed to have my own way with such perfect liberty, in the house of another person, that, when he handed me to the door of my bed-chamber, and there took a most tender

and affectionate leave of me for the night, I was almost tempted to regret that I had expressed a desire to pass it in solitude.

"It is a nice room," said I, "and the fire burns cheerfully. Do you think there are any ghosts in this part of the world?"

Worcester however was too modest in his idolatry, and had too great a dread of giving offence to me, to take my hint.

He merely reminded me that he was close at hand; and I had but to touch my bell, to bring him in an instant to my side.

The next morning I was awakened by Lord Berwick's odd voice calling to Worcester.

"I have brought you some prime apples, which came from my country house this morning, and Sophia wants you both to dine with me to-day. In short, she will not come unless you do."

I hurried on my dressing-gown, and assured Lord Berwick that I should meet her with pleasure.

Lord Worcester said that he ought to be at parade; but declared, no matter what might be the consequence, that he could not and never would leave me again.

After breakfast, his two grooms rode up to the door with three horses: one of them was a delightfully quiet-looking lady's horse.

"Who is to ride that one which is without a saddle?" I inquired.

Worcester made Will Haught bring down from his dressing-room one of the most beautiful, easy side-saddles I ever beheld, richly embroidered with blue silk.

"Will you ride, Harriette?" asked Worcester. "If so, I hope you will approve of this saddle of my choosing, which shall always be kept in my dressing-room, that no one may use it for an instant, except yourself."

We took a very long ride, and were joined by my former acquaintance Colonel Palmer, who pressed me

very politely to accompany Lord Worcester to dine at the mess-room.

"Not to day," said I; "certainly next week, with Worcester's permission."

Colonel Palmer fixed on an early day in the week, and kindly assured us he would get the mess-dinner kept back for an hour, knowing how fond Worcester was of late hours. He then ventured gently to hint something about Colonel Quintin's displeasure at his having failed to attend parade that morning.

"I shall scold you," continued the colonel, addressing me, "if this happens again."

Worcester and I rode about the country together till it was nearly time to dress: the under-groom, who was waiting at my door for my horse, held out his hand for my foot, to assist me in dismounting, while his master was taking leave of Colonel Palmer; and I was just going to accept his assistance when Worcester, in much agitation, desired him to desist, and never attempt such presumption again.

I assured his lordship that I should not like him a bit the better for dirtying his hands or his gloves with my muddy shoes: but he was peremptory.

Lord Berwick treated us most magnificently; but Sophia, the gentle, dovelike Sophia, was become so very cross and irritable to his lordship, that it was disgreeable to everybody present.

After dinner we played at cards; and, when we had concluded one of the most stupid evenings possible, Worcester and I took our leave.

The next morning Lord Berwick called on me, to entreat that I would consider my sister's welfare and persuade her to place herself under his protection.

"The annuity I propose giving her," continued his lordship, "of £500, shall be derived from money in the funds."

"And so you really are at last caught, my lord," said I, "fairly caught in love's trap? Now I am rather curious to learn what particular happiness you

expect to enjoy with a girl who, though she is my sister, I may say, as you and everybody know it as well as myself, never showed any character but once in her whole life; and that was in her unequivocal dislike of you?"

"I do not mind that," answered his lordship, "and, by giving her whatever she wants, she may perhaps get over her dislike."

"Is it her beauty then which has won your heart?"

"In part," answered Berwick; "but chiefly the opinion I have formed of her truth. I could never live with a woman whom I must watch and suspect. Now, I am disposed to believe implicitly every word Sophia utters."

"And with good reason," I interrupted him, "for I am convinced that Sophia seldom, if ever, tells an untruth; and certainly there is something very candid and fair in her unqualified acknowledgment of dislike towards you, since she is evidently fond of all the good things your money can buy, and I think she particularly likes a good dinner."

"And therefore," Lord Berwick resumed, "as her friend you ought to advise her to come to me."

I told his lordship that I really could not overcome my reluctance to interfere in such matters.

"I want her to decide," said his persevering lordship, "that I may give orders about buying the lease of a house for her in town, and furnishing it."

In the evening we all went into Lord Berwick's private box at the theatre, and were very merry, with the exception of his lordship, who sat down quietly at the very back of the box, where he could neither see nor hear. Sophia did not once take the slightest notice of him. For my part, I asked him several times, if he would not exchange places with Lord Worcester; but he assured me that he disliked seeing a play more than sitting in the dark.

"Sophia ought to chat with you then, since she chooses to favour you with her company."

"Oh, I do not like to be talked to," said Lord Berwick.

Every morning of my life I was entertained with his lordship's prosing about Sophia.

"I do not think," said he, "that Sophia will ever willingly deceive me."

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